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No. 470.

{ COMPLETE. }

FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 20 ROSE STREET, N. Y.
NEW YORK, January 9, 1881.

ISSUED EVERY MONDAY.

{ PRICE }
{ 5 CENTS. }

Vol. I

TUMBLING TIM; OR, Traveling with a Circus.

By PETER PAD.

Author of "The Shortys Married and Settled Down," "The Shortys' Trip Around the World," "Bob Rollick; or, What was He Born For?" "Ebenezer Crow," "Stump; or, Little, but Oh, My!" "Chips and Chin Chin," "Stuttering Sam," "Tommy Bounce," "Tommy Bounce, Jr., a Chip of the Old Block," "Tommy Bounce at College," "Tom, Dick, and the —," "Tommy Dodd," "Shorty; or, Kicked into Good Luck," "Shorty in Search of His Dad," Etc., Etc., Etc.



He lost his hold, and was thrown into the air with a tremendous bounce, which caused him to turn two or three summersaults in the air.

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TUMBLING TIM;

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CHAPTER I.

SOME five or six years ago when Lent's circus was about giving a show at the Capitoline Grounds, in Brooklyn, the hero of this very true story first made his entrance into public notice.

Up to that time he had always been called "Tumbling Tim," and it is doubtful whether he ever had any other name. At all events, he was not certain whether he had or not, or whether he had any parents or not.

He was a waif, a nobody in particular, and had grown to be fifteen or sixteen years of age, earning his own living by blacking boots, peddling, and, in fact, doing anything whereby he could earn a nickle, and sleeping wherever he could get a chance.

He was rather a good-looking chap, and always good-natured. In fact, had he not been so fond of sport, he might have obtained many situations and learned a trade. But he cared nothing for such things, and seemed to enjoy living from hand to mouth the best.

Like most boys, he was exceedingly fond of the circus and variety shows. He had learned to dance a rattling good jig; could play the banjo; do a great many contortionist feats, and now and then picked up pennies by performing them upon the street or at base-ball matches, where there was a crowd of people, and in this way he came to be called Tumbling Tim.

He had for a long time been ambitious of becoming a circus-performer, and so when Lent's circus came to Brooklyn, he resolved to make application and see if he couldn't get a job so as to learn more of the business.

The tents had been pitched, and everything made ready for the evening performance when he presented himself to the proprietor, who was seeing the finishing touches placed upon the ring.

"Be you the boss?" he asked, walking up to Mr. Lent.

"Yes. What do you want?"

"I want a job."

"Don't want you. Get out!"

This rather bluffed poor Tim, but instead of going away as he had been told to do by the bluff proprietor, he hung around, gazing upon the ring and the different trappings with open mouth and feelings of reverential awe.

Presently, seeing Mr. Lent disengaged, he again approached him.

"Say, boss, I'll work awful cheap."

"What the deuce— Didn't I tell you to clear out?" said Lent, angrily.

"But I want to tell you what I can do."

"I don't care what you can do."

"I can tumble, and—"

"Ah! can you tumble?" he asked, suddenly.

"Yes, boss."

"Well, let's see you take a tumble," said Mr. Lent, peevishly.

But Tim was all business, and not noticing the meaning of the proprietor's invitation, and thinking that he had asked him to show what he could do, he threw away his cap and began to show off the best he knew, and it was not so very slouchy, either; in fact, it was good enough to attract the manager's attention.

"That'll do. You aren't engaged."

"But if I can't do that well enough ter suit you, I'll do anything. I want ter be a circus performer the wo'st way, boss," pleaded Tim.

"Nonsense. You haven't got it in you."

"But I can learn, boss."

"I don't want you."

"I'll work awful cheap."

"How cheap?"

"Anything you'll give me, boss."

"Work for a dollar a week?"

"Yes, if that's all I'm worth."

"Well, you have got it bad, haven't you?" asked Lent, laughing.

"Wo'st you ever saw, boss?"

"Did you ever see a trick mule?"

"Yes, Dan Rice's."

"Well, seeing that you want to go so bad, I'll tell you what I'll do. What's your name?"

"Tim."

"Tim what?"

"Tumbling Tim, they call me."

"But haven't you any other?"

"Not as I knows of."

"What's your father's name?"

"Hang me if I know, boss."

"Haven't you any parents?"

"Nixy! Never had, as I knows on."

"Your own boss, eh?"

"Yes, but I wish I wasn't."

"How so?"

"I'd like to have you for my boss."

"Well, I'll tell you what I will do, Tim. I'll give you five dollars a week for the season, as long as you suit me, and pay your expenses."

"Whoop—bully!" exclaimed Tim, turning a summersault to manifest his delight.

"But I don't want you to tumble."

"No?" asked Tim, somewhat surprised.

"No; I want you for a dummy."

"A dummy—what's that?"

"To work the trick mule," said Mr. Lent, while a half wicked smile played around his mouth.

"How?"

"I want you to sit on a front seat, and when the clown offers fifty dollars for any one who successfully rides the mule around the ring, you come out and offer to try it. And the success of your trial in making the audience laugh will determine whether I keep you or not. Do you understand it?"

"Oh, yes, I understand it. When shall I begin?"

"To-night. I'll speak to Mr. Smith about you."

"All right; I'll try. Anything to get with a circus," replied Tim, gleefully, and away he hurried to tell the good news to his friends.

"If that business don't cure him before he has worked at it long, I'm mistaken," said Mr. Lent, speaking to his ring-master, who had heard the whole conversation.

Tim aroused the jealousy and envy of all the boot-blacks in Brooklyn, by announcing to them in triumphant tones that he was one of their craft no longer, but that he was now engaged as a circus performer.

Consequently every one of them who could raise a quarter that night, went to the show to see Tim make his first appearance, some of them prophesying one thing and some another regarding him.

Tim was one of the first persons to enter the tent that night, and secured a front seat, ready and eager for the business assigned him.

Three or four of his companions got seats near or near to him, and chaffed him most unmercifully regarding what he would do.

But Tim was a brave-hearted fellow, and chaffed back instead of getting mad, and in the meantime thought over what he had seen others do with Dan Rice's trick mule, knowing, of course, that the object was to make the people laugh.

So he resolved to do his best to accomplish that object, even if he did get bounced badly. The performance began with a grand entree of all the performers on horseback, with the exception of the ringmaster and clown, and a fine display it was indeed, although Tim took to the clown with the greatest admiration.

Then followed feats of horsemanship by that king of riders, Robert Stickney, after which the ringmaster and clown entered into a conversation something like this:

"I say, old man, don't you wish you could ride like that?" asked the clown.

"Indeed, sir, I should be very proud of such an accomplishment. But tell me, why is it that you never learned to ride?"

"Oh, I know how to ride first-rate."

"In a wagon, most likely."

"No, sir, I am a bareback rider."

"I dare say that you could ride in a wagon with your back bare."

"No, sir, I can ride an *animule*."

"A what?"

"Any—mule."

"I don't believe that you can ride anything that stands on four legs."

"Yes, I can, and I saw you ride something with four legs last night."

"What was it?"

"A bed."

"I mean an animal with four legs, sir. You are so sharp that I suspect you have been eating razors."

"Yes, I often raise-er meal."

"But about your riding, sir?"

"I'm the boss."

"Will you be kind enough to show us a specimen of your horsemanship?"

"Yes; bring forth the fiery, untamed steed," called the clown; and one of the attendants led in the trick mule.

"There he is," thought Tim, as the audience laughed loudly at the "untamed steed."

"Do you call that a steed, sir?" asked the ringmaster.

"Well, he is somewhat *unsteady*, sometimes, but he is a very fine animal for all that."

"Very well. Now show us some of your skill in riding him."

"All right," said the clown, going up to the mule.

"Whoa, Emma!"

As he said this, up went the mule's heels in a very suggestive manner.

"But why do you call such a beast as that Emma?"

"Because it *Emmer* good name," saying which he leaped astride of the animal. "Now, Emma, show yourself."

And he did show himself, raising first on his hind and then his fore legs, going through the motions of a canter, but without going ahead a single foot, creating a loud laugh.

"Well, I should call that a rocking-horse."

"No, sir; it's a rocking mule. Twist his tail, will you?"

This, of course, produces another roar.

"Not much."

"Well, it don't take much to make him go. But I'll show you how it works to twist the other end of him," saying which he twisted the mule's ears, and he began to go around the ring backwards, creating great merriment. "Now you twist his tail and see him go ahead," he added, doing some comic "mugging" at the same time.

"No, sir, I wish to keep what brains I have got," replied the ringmaster.

"Well, what you have won't make you round-shouldered."

"What is that you say, sir?" and he cracked his whip at him fiercely, causing the mule to start around the ring, head first.

As soon as he got under way, the clown stood up on his back and went through with a series of burlesque imitations of great bareback riders, provoking any amount of laughter.

"Very good," said the ringmaster, after he had brought the mule to a standstill.

"But you can't do it."

"I don't wish to try, sir."

"But you can't ride him once around the ring; bet you fifty dollars you can't."

The ringmaster shook his head.

"Well, just to make it interesting, I will bet any person present fifty dollars that he can't ride the mule once around the ring," said he, appealing to the audience.

This was Tim's cue, and leaping from his seat, he was soon in the ring.

A round of applause greeted his "first appearance"

on any stage," and the clown grinned and winked at the audience.

"I'll try for that fifty," exclaimed Tim.

"Good boy. Nothing like trying on things in this world, especially a mule. Now, Emma, remember there is a bet of fifty dollars on this, and if you go back on me I shall have to sell you to pay the money."

The sagacious animal began to teter up and down, as though anxious for the trial.

"Extra oats, mind, if you don't lose."

Tim threw off his coat and hat and then bounded lightly astride of the mule, while not only the audience but the proprietor and performers eagerly watched the contest.

The mule knew his business, for the moment Tim landed on his back he gave a "buck" and sent him up

and reaching backwards he caught hold of his mane with the other.

Amid shouts of "go it!" from the people, he began to kick the mule with his heels, and he reared and plunged like a crazy rocking-horse.

But that mule's "bucking" was too much for Tim, and after trying it on him two or three times, he finally raised him about ten feet into the air, and when he came down the wind was nearly bounced out of him.

That was enough for one night. He had got all the mule he wanted for once, and amid great laughter he limped back to his seat, where his friends chaffed him like everything.

"Anybody else want a piece of this mule?" asked the clown, but nobody manifested any desire to win that fifty dollars.

outside than by the circus people, although they all understood the racket.

Tim, however, wasn't half discouraged, and resolved to work his way upward, although the people belonging to the circus made up their minds that they should have any quantity of fun with him if he continued with them.

The next night he went through with the same business quite as successfully, and on the third night—that nobody might tumble to the racket—he blacked up and entered the ring as a darkey, producing a bushel of fun, and doing even better than on the other two occasions.

In fact, Mr. Lent began to see that Tim had lots of stuff in him, if that trick mule didn't succeed in knocking it out of him, and that he was making his



And he kept yelling for him to "git up!" instead of which, he proceeded to get down, by kneeling and then rolling over upon the unfortunate rider.

about five feet into the air, and coming down, he rolled in the sawdust in a very demoralized condition, while the audience, and especially his friends, roared at his mishap.

"How do you like it as far as you've got?" asked the clown, as soon as he could be heard.

"Bully fun!" exclaimed Tim, and this brought forth his first earned laugh.

"Have some more of it?"

"You bet," and again he flung himself astride of that little educated mule.

This time he put his arms around his neck and kicked the animal with his feet. This style of doing business rather puzzled the mule, and for a moment he stood perfectly still, as though thinking what he should do next.

"Remember them extra oats, Emma," said the clown, whereat the mule reared and plunged around madly.

But Tim held on like a flea to a dog's back, and the audience cheered lustily.

"Get up!" he yelled, and kicked again, whereat the mule quietly laid down and rolled over in the sawdust, of course obliging Tim to relinquish his hold, and occasioning a deal more laughter.

"Bully fun, eh?" cried the clown.

"Haven't had so much fun since that horse car run over me," said Tim, loud enough to be heard by all, and again did he score a laugh, which made him solid with the proprietor.

"Have another piece of this mule-steak?"

"Yes, I'll try him once more."

"Want me to send word to your friends?"

"No, they are all here, boss."

"Well, they must love you," said the clown, for to tell the truth, he was being rather eclipsed by this boy, and nothing makes a circus clown so mad as to have somebody else get a laugh from the audience.

Tim again threw himself astride of the mule, but this time facing his tail, which he seized with one hand,

As soon as the performance was over, Mr. Lent sought Tim, expecting to find him one of the sickest boys in the world.

"Well, Tim, how do you like circus biz?"

"Oh, first-rate. How did I do it?" asked Tim.

"You did tip-top. Did you get hurt?"

"Well, boss, I did get tumbled a little rough," said Tim, shaking his head.

"Oh, that's nothing after you get used to it, that is if you don't break your neck before you do get used to it," said Mr. Lent.

"I suppose not, but I'm satisfied if you be, and I guess the mule is."

"Yes, he appeared to enjoy it first-rate."

Just then the clown appeared, having changed his dress and washed up.

"Well, young fellow, what do you think of circus life?" he asked, cheerfully, for he had been informed of the racket of hiring Tim for a dummy to work the mule.

"Oh, it's bully, boss," replied Tim, cheerfully.

"It is, eh? I thought it was muley when I saw you going up into the air," said the clown, at which both he and the proprietor joined in a laugh.

"Well, he is a little uppish, I must say."

"No, you was the one that was uppish. But you mustn't be so fresh."

"How so?"

"You must let me do the talking, and you do the acting—you and the mule."

"Now I don't think so, Smith," said Mr. Lent. "I think the little chin which you worked up between you to-night was just the cheese, so just keep it up—understand?"

"All right; but if this young fellow continues with us, we will work up some new business."

"Give Tim a chance, for he may die young," said Lent, and again they both laughed.

But Tim got laughed at more by his acquaintances

part of the business a feature of the show, and Tim took on airs accordingly, greatly to the disgust of the clown.

They played in Brooklyn for a week, and Tim astonished everybody connected with the show on Saturday night—the last performance—by blacking up and dressing as a negro wench. He literally carried the house by storm, and took the clown all aback when he jumped into the ring to try for the fifty dollars.

It was one of the most comical sights that was ever seen in a circus in connection with the old trick mule business, and Smith, the clown, although he quickly recognized him, was wild with rage because he seemed to be forgotten by the audience, and completely overshadowed by Tim in his new guise.

"I try fo' dat fifty dollars, boss," said he, as he entered for his business.

"You?" exclaimed the clown.

"Yes, boss; I used fo' ter ride mules down in Callina, an' I guess I can get away wid dis one," replied Tim, whereat there was another outburst of applause and laughter.

There was nothing left for Smith to do but to carry out the business with a very poor grace, and secretly hoping that Tim would get his neck broken, while Mr. Lent was perfectly staggered at his originality.

All of the circus people watched the performance with great interest, only a few of them knowing at first that it was Tumbling Tim.

Instead of jumping upon the mule sideways, as females are supposed to ride, he pulled up his petticoats and flung himself astride of the mule, who was evidently as much astonished as anybody was.

For a moment he stood perfectly still, as though undecided what to do, during which the clown was getting in his funny business, and the audience was convulsed with laughter.

"Whoa, dar, Mr. Mule! yer wants ter be good to der sex, don't yer know?" said Tim.

"You want to be a sex-ton, Emma," said the clown, winning a laugh.

"Whoa, dar, honey!" exclaimed Tim, as the mule began to prance around.

Tim had made a slight miscalculation, for the female toggery bothered him very much, and when that mule began to "buck" and get in his fine work, he lost his hold, and was thrown into the air with a tremendous bounce, which caused him to turn two or three summersaults in the air in the most comical way, while the display of striped stockings and the like created the wildest laughter.

But he was all broken up, and was assisted back to his seat feeling very dizzy and queer.

CHAPTER II.

TIM got very badly shaken up that night, the last one in Brooklyn where Lent's circus had performed for a week to good business, but he came out of it all right, and instead of calling him "Tumbling Tim," the members of the company called him "India Rubber Tim."

But he made a big hit with Mr. Lent, the proprietor of the circus, and he at once raised his salary from five to ten dollars per week, and congratulated him upon his hit.

From Brooklyn they went to Williamsburg for three performances, and here again Tim made a hit and became one of the features of the show in his performances with the trick mule, appearing the first night as a green country boy, the next as a "tough," and on the last night as a colored boy.

But of course the clown, Bill Smith, did not like the hits he made, for, as I said before, nothing makes a circus clown so mad as to have anybody else raise a laugh in the audience. They don't care a snap how much applause the riders and other performers get, but it is a sin in their eyes for anybody but themselves to provoke a laugh.

But Smith still hoped that the mule would succeed in breaking Tim's neck before long, and so allowed him to have his own way.

Tim made up his mind, however, not to have a broken neck, but on the contrary to learn all he could of the business, especially as regarded the mule, asking and obtaining permission to take charge of the mule's keeping, the two were not long in becoming such good friends that the clown's influence over the animal was suddenly lost, he liking Tim the best.

One night when they were playing at Springfield, Mass., the mule manifested his dislike for the clown by suddenly "bucking" while he was doing his funny bareback business, and sending him up into the air about ten feet, allowing him to come down like a cat on all fours, greatly to his surprise, although the audience yelled and roared for a long time.

In fact, it was the biggest laugh that he got during the whole evening, and as that was medicine for his sprains and bruises, he concluded to swallow it.

"Whoa, Emma!" he roared. "What's the matter with you? got the heaves?"

"I should say he did have the heaves," said the ringmaster, laughing with the audience.

"Yes, he *hove* me, and I am pretty *heavy* myself. But tell me why that mule is like a ship that has lost her rudder?" said the clown.

"Well, I don't know, Master Funnyman. Why is the mule like a ship that has lost her rudder?"

"Because he can't heave two."

"Well, I am not so sure but he could heave two, sir."

"All right; get on with me and see if he can heave two."

"No, sir, I am not ambitious for such a rise in the world."

"But it's very healthy exercise."

"I am not fond of health lifts, sir."

"Well, have at you again. Why is that mule like a read-headed school-marm?"

Nonsense! Why is he like a read-headed school-marm?" demanded the ring-master, severely.

"Because he gets his back up so quickly," replied the clown, and while the laugh lasted, he again approached the mule. "Whoa, Emma! What's the matter with you? Somebody has been feeding you on hops, I guess; whoa, now!"

Once more he mounted him to finish his business, and succeeded in doing so without further mishap, after which he went through the farce of offering a reward for any one who would succeed in riding the mule once around the ring, and Tim came on to put in his fine business, this time dressed like a dandy darkey.

"I say, boss, I'll try some of this mule meat," said he, creating a laugh.

"Halloo! here's a smoked American," said the clown, to the audience. "A regular son of Ham, in fact. Well, my sunburnt friend, are you ambitious to win that fifty dollars?"

"I'll go for it, shuah."

"Well, I rather guess you will. It's easy enough to do; in fact, it is just as simple as falling off a log."

"All right. I can fall off a log every day in the year. Fetch on your mule!"

"Here you are, sir. Shall I assist you in getting on? You won't need any assistance in getting off, probably."

"Bet he won't buck me so high as he did you just now," said Tim, winning a laugh.

"Probably not; you are not so light."

"Whoa, Emma!" said he, throwing himself astride of the animal.

"Remember the bet, Emma," was the clown's instructions to the mule, who at once began to prance and jump about at a wild rate.

The audience roared and laughed, of course, and Tim was putting in his funny work. But finally the mule threw him head first into the sawdust, to the great delight of the amused spectators.

"Give me another chance," cried Tim, brushing the dirt from himself.

"Oh, certainly, as many as you want. Nothing mean about me or my mule."

Tim again threw himself astride of the mischievous animal, and patting him on the neck, he spoke a few words to him in an undertone, after which he called upon him in a loud voice to go ahead.

The mule teetered up and down for about a minute, when he suddenly shot ahead and cantered around the ring amid the wildest applause, but dumping Tim in a most uncereceremonious manner after completing the circuit.

The audience fairly howled with delight, and loudly declared the "coon" entitled to the fifty dollars reward.

"All right, Mr. Blackberry, the money is yours," said the clown. "Step right back into the dressing-room, where you will find Mr. Lent, my banker," and Tim retired in that direction, receiving storms of applause.

"So it seems you lost your bet?" said the ringmaster, when quiet had been restored.

"Yes, I guess the mule is partial to brunettes. You'll get no oats for a week to pay for that going back on me," he added, turning to the mule, who stood there looking ever so honest.

"Confound you, you spoiled the whole business!" growled the clown, coming out of the ring to give chance for a bareback act.

"How so; didn't folks yell?" asked Tim.

"That be hanged! You have spoiled that mule to a certainty."

"Let him do it once in a while, for I think it works up good," said Mr. Lent.

"Oh, yes, let him spoil all my business," sneered the clown.

"Nonsense; don't you be so confounded jealous. He got the biggest round of applause of anybody to-night. But don't you do that more than once in a place, Tim," he added.

"All right, boss."

"But I tell you he will spoil the mule."

"How can he do it?"

"Because he will get him so that I can't ride him and anybody else can, in that way spoiling the whole business."

"I'll risk it."

"All right; you're the boss," replied the clown, turning away disgusted.

"Be very careful, Tim, and not get him so that anybody can ride him."

"But didn't he heave me twice?"

"Yes, and if you will keep him like that, all right. But you mustn't teach him to throw Smith."

"I thought he'd be awful glad of that," said Tim, with a comical grin.

"Why so?"

"Because he got the biggest laugh he ever got."

"You look out, Tim, for if he heard you say that he'd murder you. Do just as I tell you, and be very careful in the future."

"All right, boss," replied he, going to a pail of water to wash up.

The next place they showed in was Hartford, Ct., and Tim brought up the rear of the cavalcade, or street procession, riding on the mule.

This "tail end" produced considerable fun among the spectators, and especially among the boys of the city, who followed with all sorts of cries and jokes.

Tim was not made up at all, and took but little notice of what was said or done by the crowd; but when some of them began to throw things at him, he "kicked," and offered to fight the whole gang of them if they would only wait until he went to the stable with the mule.

A cry of derision greeted him.

"Be you one of the daring barebackers?" cried one of the crowd.

"Put a blanket on your horse!" said another.

"Mow off his ears!"

"Braid his tail!" and a dozen other cries greeted him.

Tim was as mad as blazes, and would have ridden the mule right into the crowd of tormentors had not Mr. Lent forbidden him to do so; and he was obliged to swallow the chaffing and be quiet. The police, however, drove the boys away, and Tim was left unmolested.

After the procession was over with, the ring horses were taken to a stable to be cared for by grooms belonging to the circus company, and, of course, Tim went there to look after the welfare of his mule, and, as usual, that animal attracted more attention than any of the others, he having become quite famous.

At the stable there was a lank, prying sort of a Yankee, who wanted to know everything about everything, and finally came upon Tim, who was rubbing down the mule.

"Oh, that's the trick muel, is it?" he asked, approaching him.

"Yes, boss, that's him," said Tim.

"Waal, he arn't much of a trick muel anyway," he drawled, at the same time taking good aim and squirting some tobacco-juice over his tail.

"You don't think so, hey? Why not?"

"Why, anybody can ride him."

"Yes?"

"Didn't a nigger ride him around the track up in Springfield? Of course he did, an' I've come down to Hartford just to scoop in another fifty if you folks'll offer it."

"Of course. There's a fifty up on him at every performance."

"All right, I'll just follow this old circus around all summer."

"Good idea."

"Guess it is; I'll make more money than your boss does, I'll bet."

"Great racket, boss."

"Oh, yu needn't try to guy me, for I'm one of the boys, I am. If a nigger can ride that muel around the ring an' scoop a cool fifty, I'll bet I can do it; I'd like to see him get out from under me; I see how it is worked. I saw that nigger work it at Springfield."

"But he got thrown, didn't he?"

"Waal, a little. But I saw him patting him on the neck an' torkin' to him. That's all a muel wants is a little kindness. Oh, yu'll see me at the show to-night on the front seat, an' ready fer that fifty."

"Well, boss, I hope you'll get it."

"Yu bet I will."

"Did you ever ride a mule?"

"No, but I can ride thunder out of a hoss; broke many a colt."

"But you never broke a mule?"

"No, but I'm goin' to break this one to-night."

"I shall be there to see yer, boss."

"I don't care who in thunder sees me if I only get that fifty dollars," said he, with a swagger and another squirt of tobacco juice; then approaching nearer, he slapped the mule on the haunches and exultingly cried: "Whoa, Emma!"

As he did so, one of the mule's legs shot out in the direction of his head, just catching his hat and knocking it to mush.

"Great thunder!" exclaimed Mr. Fresh, looking wildly around. "What was that?"

"The mule winked at yer, boss," replied Tim, laughing heartily.

"Winked?"

"Yes, he winks with his hind legs."

"By gosh, if he had a hit me on the head—"

"You'd never wanted a doctor again."

"Why?"

"Because the undertaker'd get his job away from him," replied Tim.

"Where in thunder's my hat?" asked he, looking around.

Picking up what there was left of it, he could scarcely recognize it, and on attempting to place it upon his head again, he was greeted by a loud laugh from the other grooms and those who stood around the stable.

"Oh, that's all right; you may laugh, but I'll be 'round to yer darned old show to-night and scoop that fifty; that'll make good for my hat," said he, slouching out of the stable.

"We'll have some fun out of that chap if he comes around to-night," said a groom.

"You bet we will," replied Tim.

After finishing his work he sought the clown and ringmaster and told them about it. They agreed to do their part, while Mr. Lent was delighted at the idea, and inwardly thought that Tim had done a good thing by riding the mule around the ring, since it encouraged others in the belief that they could do it as well.

That night the big tent was packed full of people, and when the mule was brought on, Tim had no difficulty in singling out the ambitious Yankee, for so anxious was he to be the first to accept the offer that he stood up in the front seat that he occupied, although there was a cry of "Down front!" behind him.

Finally the usual offer was made by the clown, and Johnny Fresh leaped into the ring.

"Here, I'll go for that fifty," said he, as he swaggered towards the clown.

"How far are you going for it?"

"Around the ring, of course. Bring on yer darned old mule!" he exclaimed.

"There he is; help yourself," said the clown, in such a way as to "bring down" the house.

The appearance of this fellow in the ring was the signal for applause, cat calls, and all sorts of funny expressions by the crowd. But of these he took no notice—he meant business.

Approaching the mule, who flopped one ear at him as though remembering him, he flung himself astride. "Go lang!" he yelled, but the mule would not budge a step.

Then he proceeded to kick him with his heels for the purpose of urging him along, but all to no purpose, and the audience was all of a roar at the funny scene.

"Twist his tail!" yelled some one.

"Stand him on his head and he'll go!" suggested somebody else.

"Go lang!" yelled Mr. Fresh.

"Put sawdust in his ears!"

"Build a fire under him!"

"Go lang, yu—"

He didn't have time to finish the sentence, for just then that balky mule suddenly "humped" himself and Mr. Fresh shot up into the air as though he had been fired from a mortar, producing a perfect scream of laughter.

Slowly gathering himself up, he glanced angrily at the audience and then returned to the mule, who stood in his old tracks.

"Goldarn yer hide, I'll ride yu or yu will me," he muttered, while hundreds of voices in the audience were shouting all sorts of advice and suggestions to him.

"Try it again?" asked the clown.

"Yes, by thunder," said he, and again did he get on top of that animal. "Git up!" he yelled, throwing his arms around his neck.

For a moment the mule paid no attention to him, and he kept yelling for him to "git up!" instead of which he proceeded to get down, by kneeling and then rolling over upon the unfortunate rider.

It was fun for the audience, but it wasn't exactly that for Mr. Fresh. The wind was nearly squeezed out of him, and as he slowly regained his feet, he felt as though he had had enough; and without a word he slunk limping away, and was glad to escape the jeers which were fired at him from every side, and left the tent.

They never heard from him again, and the probability is that he came to the conclusion that it would not be a profitable or a pleasant undertaking to follow that circus around all summer for the sake of capturing that fifty dollars reward every time it was offered.

The next place visited by the circus was New Haven, where good business was done, and where Tim had considerable fun.

From there they went to Norwich, and on the way there, or rather while marching into the city, two Irishmen, who owned a little garden farm just outside of the city, saw the mule on which Tim was mounted, and not knowing that it was any different from any other, made up their minds to steal it for their own use.

"Come away, Pat. Sure it's the devil we've got instead of a mule."

"It's true for ye, Teddy. Lave the baste. He's no good at all at all," and away they hobbled, leaving the mule to return to the stable.

They next went to Providence, Rhode Island, where they were billed to show for a full week, a thing the company all liked, since such long stops gave them a chance to rest.

Meanwhile I have only given one side of the fun, that relating to the mule business; but the ordinary companies of circus performers are great lovers of fun, and some of the finest practical jokes ever played in the world have been played by traveling circus companies.

Lent's company for this year was no exception to the

doing his business with him for the amusement of the crowd, he managed to work a racket on the clown, who had been from the first one of Tim's persecutors.

It will be remembered that Tim had been engaged to act the part of a spectator in the audience, who was to respond when the clown offered a reward of fifty dollars to any man who could ride the educated mule once around the ring, and, while doing this business, in various characters, he had become a feature of the show, and that for some time he had been given the entire care of the animal when not in the ring, and that he had altered the course of his "education" so far as to make him even a greater friend to himself than he was to the clown.

Well, as I said before, he had worked upon him until he got the animal so completely under his control that



"Come out here, young fellow," said he, leading him into the ring. He was a big, overgrown booby, and at once began to cry. "You stole in under the canvas, sir."

"Sure he's no good ter them showmen. They have all the bastes they want, an' more, too, while we haven't wan between us," they argued.

They followed the circus into town and saw where the mule was quartered, after which they laid their plans to steal him.

It required considerable ingenuity to do this, but they were very good hands at such business, and after everybody was asleep one of them watched outside the stable while the other stole in and succeeded in getting the mule outside.

The poor animal was tired and sleepy, and scarcely knew what was being done to him, and they had no trouble in leading him away.

"Ride him, Pat," said one, "an' when ye get tired lave me straddle him."

"Faix, I think that would be a good idea," replied the other, preparing to mount.

He threw himself astride of the mule, who was instantly alive to business, and that mule thief had scarcely got seated before he was landed in the mud.

"Put's ther matter wid ye, Pat?" asked his companion.

"Begorra, I think I didn't get on him at all at all, but jumped over him inter the mud," he muttered, picking himself up.

Then he got on again, only to be "bucked" this time and fired almost out of sight.

"Bad manners ter such a baste as that," he growled.

"Lave me try him, Pat. Sure, ye niver war a good rider anyway," and the other one now got on board of the mule.

But he fared quite as bad as his friend had, and then they began to whale him. This, however, wasn't exactly the fun that the animal liked the best, and so he began to spar with his heels.

First one and then the other of them got knocked out of time, and slowly they began to realize that they had stolen more than they could take away.

rule, as Tumbling Tim soon found out, for many a racket had they played upon him, even in the few weeks that he had been with them.

Tim was very ambitious to become both a rider and a leaper, and whenever the others were at practice he would jump in and try himself on the spring-board.

They fixed it one day in such a way that it threw him up about twenty feet into the air, and when he came down he landed upon an old horse-blanket covered with a thick coat of tar, which they had placed for him without his knowledge. It took him all the remainder of the day to get out of that sticky scrape, but while he was doing so, he vowed to get even with them.

CHAPTER III.

THE circus company was still playing at Providence, where the leapers at their practice had played such a sticky trick on Tim, by allowing him to land upon an old horse-blanket which they had coated with tar, and which stuck to him closer than a step-mother.

Tim was bound to get even with them somehow, and so watched his chance.

From Providence they went to Worcester, Mass., stopping at intermediate places which were large enough to warrant paying audiences, but in nearly every place the circus troupe "stood" Tim up on some sort of a racket for their amusement.

In fact, they began to look upon him as a never-ending source of amusement, and occasionally Tim got a little fun out of it himself, although it was generally worked at his expense.

But it was while playing in Worcester that he got in a little "fine work" on his own account, which went a long way towards making him even with the gang.

By carefully training the mule, he got him so that he would do certain things, and on this occasion, while

he could do almost anything with him, and it was at Worcester that he first tried the racket on the clown.

On one occasion Tim had appeared as a green country boy, and the fun he created while trying to ride that mule and earn the fifty dollars reward, was the talk of the town the next day, and everybody was asking who he was, never suspecting that he belonged to the circus troupe.

On the occasion of which I am speaking, he appeared in the ring as a colored boy.

The clown had everything his own way all through the performance, and when the mule was brought out the crowd fairly roared, having heard so much about the fun he created the night before.

Finally, after going through with the first part of his business, he said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, owing to the great success which attended the offer of fifty dollars reward last night for any person who would ride the mule around the track, I now renew it. [Great laughter and applause.] Is there any man in the audience who would like to try for that fifty?"

Tim, dressed as a colored boy, sauntered into the ring, causing a renewal of laughter, as everybody scented fun.

"Halloo, ebony!" shouted the clown.

"Boss, I think dat I'll try fo' dat change," said Tim walking up to the mule.

This produced another roar.

"All right, Mr. Brunette, jump right on and help yourself. Have you ever indulged in any ground and lofty tumbling?"

"No, sah; but I hab rode a mule," said Tim, with an earnest shake of his head.

"Very well. But did you bring a stretcher with you this evening?"

"Guess I don't want no stretcher fo' ter ride a little mule like dat."

"All right. Hop on."

Tim did so, but he hopped off again, or, rather, he was bounced off, and the same funny business went on for several minutes that has been before described, creating perfect roars of laughter from the audience, who never dreamed for a moment that Tim, as the darkey, was the same as the country boy who acted the night before.

But after vainly attempting to ride the mule around the ring, he finally abandoned it amid all sorts of shouts and laughter.

"Boss, dat yer mule amn't reg'lar," said he, as soon as he could be heard.

"Oh, yes, he is! He used to belong to the Regular Army O." replied the clown.

"Be a ten dollar note dat you can't ride him round de ring yourself."

"Oh, for that matter, I have already done so."

"Bet you a ten dat you can't do it some mo'."

"Try it!"

"Ride him!"

"Scoop that ten!"

"Give the coon a chance!" and a hundred other cries swelled into a perfect flood of discord, and the clown was forced to take up the offer, as he saw that he would become very unpopular if he declined.

"Can you spare that tin?" he asked, as Tim flourished the bill before him.

"I can spar dat tin if you win it."

"All right. Mr. Ringmaster, will you be so kind as to act as stakeholder?"

"Certainly; anything to add to the amusement of our friends here," and he took a ten-dollar bill from his pocket for the clown, after which he took that of Tim, and held them for the winner of the wager.

"Now, my colored brother, how will you have me ride him?"

"On top, if you can, but you wins the money if you rides him once 'round the ring in any sort ob way," replied Tim.

The clown felt a trifle suspicious that Tim had put up some sort of a job on him, as he had taken particular pains to worry Tim for several weeks, but, relying upon his control of the mule, he put on a bold face and threw himself astride of him.

"Now, go it, you big rabbit!" cried Tim, addressing the mule. "Show him some ob der fine work dat you showed me jus' now."

This caused a laugh for Tim, and it didn't make the clown very happy, either.

Then commenced one of the wildest and most comical contests that was ever seen in a circus-ring. The mule stood first on his hind-legs and then on his fore-legs, and then he bucked, throwing the unhappy clown, who had enjoyed the bouncing of so many other people. In vain he tried to urge him around the ring, and whenever he tried some new dodge to keep his seat, he would lie down and roll over in the sawdust, making it exceedingly lively for the clown to keep from getting caught beneath him.

In the meanwhile the vast audience was screaming with delight over the discomfiture of the lately triumphant clown, and there were so many different calls and suggestions to him that none of them could be distinguished.

Finally, however, after trying all the ways he could think of (and he had to think mighty quick), he came to the conclusion that he had been made the victim of another of Tim's tricks, and while swearing to get even with him for it, he resolved to give up the contest as gracefully as he could, and so turned away.

"Master Merryman, you lose," said the ring-master, as soon as he could be heard for the noise and confusion.

"Yes, the coon seems to have hoodooed the animal," replied he.

"I hoodoo you out ob dat ten, anyway," cried Tim, exultantly.

"The dark wins! Here is your money, my shadowy friend," said the ring-master, handing it to him amid thunders of applause.

The clown sneaked off into the retiring tent, as mad as a wet cat, while Tim, taking his money, started on a run for the entrance, and was soon lost to sight, leaving the impression behind that he was so overjoyed at his success that he didn't care to see the remainder of the show.

The thing was a great success, and became the talk of the town for many days afterwards, while among the younger class there was an earnest inquiry as to who the darkey was.

Smith, the clown, became the laughing stock of the whole circus company, and to make it all the more aggravating, the story (as it appeared to the assemblage) got into the papers, and created much laughter and comment on all sides.

In fact, it worked Smith up to such a pitch that he refused to continue with the company if Mr. Lent did not put a stop to Tim's pranks in the ring.

This he finally did, or at least to the extent of his carrying them so far, although Tim resolutely refused to give up the ten dollars he had won, and from that time forth he became a great favorite with the company, notwithstanding the fact that they occasionally worked rackets on him.

Every boy knows (and a great many "old boys," too), what a temptation it is to steal into a circus under the canvas, and also what a hard job it generally is to succeed in doing so.

Mr. Lent's circus was no exception to the rule, and it was a part of every canvasman's duty to watch the outside of the tent to keep these "sight-stealers" from getting in.

Many a whack did they administer to the luckless wights whom they get within reach of, and many comical situations were developed at such times.

It was while exhibiting at Lowell, Mass., that one of these transpired which is worthy of being recorded.

Among the dozens of boys who were prowling

around the tent on this occasion, was one great booby of a fellow who seemed determined to see the show for nothing.

The canvasmen had driven him away several times while attempting to steal in, but he would no sooner get bounced out of one place than he would go for another.

Finally he succeeded, and crept down under the seats to where he could see the ring by looking between the legs of a man who sat on the seat over his head.

From here he enjoyed it hugely, until about the time when the educated mule was brought in, when, thinking to take advantage of the noise and laughter on all sides, he forced his way up through, and emerged near the ring.

The clown spotted him, and just after Tim had got through with his act, he approached the fellow and took him by the ear.

"Come out here, young fellow," said he, leading him into the ring.

He was a big, overgrown booby, and at once began to cry.

"You stole in under the canvas, sir."

"I—I—bohoo!"

"No, you needn't bohoo, but you must dohoo something to pay your way. 'Come here, Emma," he added, calling to the mule, who obeyed.

"Don't let him eat me up—bohoo!" cried the "sight-stealer."

"Oh, no, he won't eat you up. You are too young and green and tender. Emma likes tough things. Can't you ride?"

"No—sir—I—"

"Try it."

"I don't want to," said he, blubbering again, while the audience laughed.

"Back up here, Emma. Here is a load of vegetables for you to take to market," and the mule backed around and began to teter up and down as though anxious for the sport to begin.

"Now get on, or you will be arrested for stealing into the show," said the clown.

This was enough, and after hesitating for a moment, he got on board that mule.

Then the fun began; fun for the spectators, and the mule, perhaps, but not much if any for that blubbering youth.

His first movement was a sudden upward one, caused by the mule's "bucking," and coming down from that (because he could not stay up), he tumbled head over heels in the sawdust, and created uproarious laughter.

It was in vain, however, that the clown tried to get him to enjoy another piece of mule meat. He had got a bellyfull, and blubbering like a calf, he brushed the sawdust from his clothes and started back to his seat, and it was conceded by everybody that he was now entitled to it.

But it is safe to say that he never tried to steal into a circus after that experience, especially if there was an educated mule connected with it.

From Lowell they went to Manchester, N. H., for two days and one matinee, and here it was that a comical affair took place which rightfully belongs in this group of comicalities to be appreciated by the readers of this over-true tale.

It was at the afternoon performance that this incident transpired, and it happened in this way.

Remembering always, however, that a circus in a country town is a great event, second only to an election day, or a general training day, and when such a show comes to town all business for miles around is suspended, and everybody goes to the circus.

This afternoon performance was given for the especial accommodation of families and those from the country, and in a majority of such performances there was a full house, or crowded tent, which ever way you like to have it.

And it was on this particular occasion that a farmer, living about ten miles outside of Manchester, came in with his entire family to see the show.

There was, first, the old man, a regular backwood Yankee, looking very much like the regular stage Yankees, whom you have seen so often, and there was his wife, a regular wide-awake Yankee woman, full of life, and anxious to see all there is to be seen for the money, after which came seven children, whose ages ran all the way from six to eighteen, and who regarded this as a holiday second only to the Fourth of July.

They had come to Manchester in the old farm wagon, bringing with them three bushels of oats, having heard that such produce was taken for admission.

They arrived in town at least an hour before the show began, and after hitching his horse, he sought the vender of tickets.

"Say, yu, be yu the man as gives out admishuns tu the circus?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. How many?" demanded the ticket agent, grabbing a new bunch of pasteboards.

"Waal, what be yu payin' for oats?"

"Oats! Oats be hanged! How many tickets do you want?"

"Waal, I've cum tu town with my family, and I want tu get into this ere circus," said he, vehemently.

"We don't take oats here."

"Ther thunder yu don't! I hearn ye did."

"Perhaps if you saw Mr. Lent you might make some arrangement, but I do not take oats for admission at the ticket wagon."

"Who's Mr. Lent?"

"The boss."

"Where is he?"

"Somewhere around."

"How shall I find him?"

"Catch him."

"But, great gosh, how shall I du it?"

"I don't know. Please step aside and give cash customers a chance," said the ticket-seller.

The Yankee was fairly crowded out of his place by the throng, who were by this time working their way to the ticket wagon, and with a growl he started out in search of somebody who knew the "boss."

The first one he tackled was a canvasman, and not wishing to be bothered he sent him to the next one, who in turn sent him to the next, and so on, until he had made the complete circuit of the tent, but yet without finding the "boss."

By this time he began to get wild, thinking that the show was about to commence, and he and his family were still on the outside.

At length, however, he found Mr. Lent, and went for him.

"I say, yu, boss, me an' my family have cum to town tu see your show, but I've got no money."

"Then you can't get in," said Mr. Lent.

"I can't?"

"No, sir; this is a strictly C. O. D. show."

"C. O. D.! Codfish?"

"No, sir. First-class show."

"But I've got oats."

"Well?"

"Don't you take oats?"

"Sometimes. Why?"

"I've got three bushels of fust-class oats; won't yu let me in on 'em?"

"Well, yes, I suppose so. How many are there of yu?" demanded the proprietor.

"Nine altogether."

"Good gracious!"

"But ther fust-class oats, mister."

"And this is a first-class show."

"Waal, you see we're a family of considerable influence. There's my wife, she—"

"Oh, that's all right. Bring around your oats and I'll see what they're like," said the proprietor, out of patience.

In less than two minutes the cart with the oats was around near the tent where the animals were kept, and finding them good, Mr. Lent gave him a pass for nine, and turned the oats over to his master of wagons.

Without loss of time the Yankee secured his mare to a tree near by, and then seeking his large family that was by this time badly mixed up with the crowd of coming sight-seers, he finally got them into line and headed them toward the circus entrance.

After a deal of pushing and crowding the entire family at length managed to get into the tent where the band was already doing its best to burst the instruments, but before they had found seats, the next to the youngest of the family had strayed away some where, and then began one of the most sensational and comical hunts for that missing boy that was ever seen.

But after going all over the inside and all around the outside of the tent, that distracted father finally found him underneath the very seat the others were seated on, he having fell through between the seats, and being too frightened to cry.

Well, the performance commenced, and, of course, they were all delighted. It was a revelation to them, neither ever having seen a circus before, and as for the clown, he was simply regarded by them as the funniest being on top of the earth.

But presently the educated mule was brought out and all the funny business gone through with, wherein Tumbling Tim appeared as a green country boy and attempted to ride the mule, but failing to do so, our Yankee friend was roused right up to the sticking point by the offer of fifty dollars to any man who would ride the animal once around the ring.

"S'phrony, I bet I could du it," said he, addressing his wife.

"Du what, Josiah?" she asked, anxiously.

"Ride that air mule."

"Waal, he's a precious bad one, Josiah."

"So be i, S'phrony. Yu know me. But if I get that air fifty dollars, I'll buy yu a new silk dress."

"Go it, Josiah!"

"Watch me, S'phrony," said he, striding into the ring, just as the clown was asking if anybody else wanted to try for the fifty dollars, after Tim had failed. A wild cheer greeted him.

"Wan't to try it, old man?" asked the clown.

"Mister Clown, bring on yer mule!" exclaimed he.

"Here you are," said the clown, bringing the mule up alongside of the countryman.

Josiah took a look at the animal and then bounded upon his back.

Then the fun commenced. Then the audience commenced to shout, and the mule commenced to have some fun. Josiah was bounced in the regular orthodox style, and came out of the contest about as hundreds of others had come; but concluding finally that he wouldn't get S'phrony's silk dress in that way, he drew himself together and rejoined his family.

CHAPTER IV.

From Manchester, N. H., they went to Lawrence, Mass., one of the most thriving and wide awake show towns in the Eastern States, and here they opened for two nights.

It was a circus to Tim all the while, for he enjoyed the life exceedingly. He had always wanted to be a circus performer, and notwithstanding the fact that his position was rather a humble one and but little to do which came under the head of performing, yet he managed to make the most of it and felt almost as happy over it as he would have done had he been the star bareback rider or the boss tumbler.

The roving life of a showman just pleased him, and there was heaps of fun to be gotten out of it in various

ways, and he had finally come to be quite a favorite with everybody connected with the circus, from the owner to the lowest hostler.

He made it a point to get personally acquainted with every town or city they visited, and in some of these explorings of strange places, he met with some curious and comical adventures, and when it is remembered that the circus journeyed in its own wagons and carriages from place to place, you can easily understand what sights they saw.

Tim always rode the educated mule on these journeys, and whenever there was a prospect of finding any fruit that he could "hook," he and the mule generally brought up the rear of the cavalcade and helped themselves, or, rather, Tim helped himself and then shared with the mule.

make friends with the dog; gave him all sorts of taffy; tried to make him believe that he was up in the tree looking for a bird's nest, but all to no purpose. That dog manifested a strong inclination to attend strictly to business.

But the mule seemed to take in the situation, and going towards the dog, he let go one of his heels, and that dog, oh! where was he?

At all events, he wasn't fooling around Tumbling Tim any more, and this enabled him to procure some apples, after which he made good time out of that neighborhood, feeding the mule as he rode him, he reaching back with his open mouth, into which Tim would place an apple every now and then.

Of course he was glad to get out of the scrape, and very much obliged to the mule for kicking the head

Tim hardly knew what to do. He could see that the rascally tramp was bad and strong enough to do almost anything, and that he was determined to have the mule just because they were on a lonely road, and he was certain that a boy could offer no resistance.

But he finally concluded to resign the mule, and let him decide whether he would submit to the exchange of riders or not. So he got down out of the saddle.

"Well, I think it is devilish mean in you."

"Mean! I'm older nor you be, youngster, an' outen common perlitiness yer should let me ride an' walk yerself," said the tramp, taking the bridle rein and making ready to mount.

"Whoa! None of yer nonsense, now. Maybe I arn't dressed-quite so nice as yer old rider was, an' maybe



"Good-by, old man! Sorry, but I must leave you," Tim yelled back at him.

Is was partially on this account that the animal formed such an attachment for him, and if he could reason at all, he probably regretted that his "education" had been so neglected that he could not climb trees to hook apples.

But he soon got educated so that he could tell the difference between a cherry tree and an apple tree, and as he jogged along the country roads, he would stop whenever he came near one, and refuse to go another step until Tim had treated him to apples.

In fact, Tim got himself into much trouble by this portion of the mule's "education," for whenever he passed an apple tree which stood near the road, no matter if it was right in front of the owner's house, he would stop and refuse to budge an inch until Tim had procured him some of the fruit.

The consequence was that he got fired at with shot-guns, clubbed, and had dogs set on him by the owners of the property which he was thus forced to appropriate.

This produced heaps of fun for the members of the company, but scarcely any for poor Tim. In fact, he had altogether too much educated mule, and heartily wished that he had not shown him how the apple business was done.

It was on one of these journeys that the mule discovered an apple tree full of nice-looking fruit, standing only a short distance from the farmer's house, and, as usual, he stopped and refused to go any further until Tim had treated him.

The result was that he had to get off, and shin up the tree, where he was presently discovered by a large dog, who manifested an objection to the proceedings, and seemed to be very desirous of seeing how Tim tasted.

Here was a nice situation. The remainder of the circus troupe was half a mile or so in advance, and there was no one to come to his rescue. He tried to

of his enemy off, but hadn't he ought to have done it, seeing that he got him into the trouble?

In vain he tried to get somebody else to ride the mule between the show towns. They knew too much about him for that, and so Tim had to stand it and get along the best he could with his thieving propensities.

But it was on one of these occasions when he was lagging behind the cavalcade that he had an adventure of a different kind altogether.

He was riding slowly along, singing a song, and thinking of nothing in particular, when he was suddenly confronted by big tramp, who appeared to mean business.

"Get off!" he said, gruffly.

"Do what?" asked Tim.

"Get off that mule."

"What for?"

"'Cos I tell yer to. Do yer hear, or shall I fondle you with this 'ere club?" he asked, shaking a big stick at him.

"Well, I don't want any of that, but—"

"Then get down from on top of that mule."

"But he belongs to Lent's circus."

"I don't care a cuss who he belongs ter; he's mine now; hear that, youngster?"

"But I shall get the devil if I let you have him," said Tim, scarcely knowing what to do.

"An' you'll get the devil if yer don't. So hurry up."

"I thought you wanted me to hurry down?"

"So I do."

"Then what did you tell me to hurry up for?"

"Hurry up an' hurry down, and don't give us any more of your lip, either," said he, once more raising his club threateningly. "I'm tired o' trampin'."

"And I guess you'll get tired of riding afore you've been on this mule very long."

"That's my business. Guess if you'd er hoofed it as long as I have, you'd help yerself ter almost anything that could carry yer."

I'm a little heavier, but we'll get along all right if yer only behave yerself," saying which he flung himself astride of the mule.

How many others had dung themselves astride of that animal in the same way and with the same amount of confidence?

In about two shakes of a pig's tail that tramp was sprawling in the dirt, after having been thrown up about ten feet.

Then followed a volley of oaths which would have made an old-fashioned pirate sick and ashamed of himself; but quickly jerking himself up, he gave the mule two or three heavy blows with his stick, and again mounted him.

"Confound yer, if yer do that trick again I'll break every bone in yer cussed body. G'lang!" he added, hitting him again.

The mule didn't manifest any desire to fire him up again, neither did he manifest any disposition to go either one way or the other.

Tim stood watching the contest with a look which was about half-and-half anxiety and a grin.

"Now, if yer don't go I'll kill yer," growled the tramp, whaling him again with his stick.

Well, he did go, but not exactly as the tramp expected, most likely. In fact, he lay deliberately down and rolled over him, nearly crushing the life out of him, and then quickly regaining his feet again, he delivered the demoralized rascal a kick that almost put the finishing touch upon him.

Tim saw his chance, and leaping into the saddle, the mule galloped away, and was well out of reach before the tramp could pull himself together and get on his pins again.

"Good-bye, old man! Sorry, but I must leave you," Tim yelled back at him.

He shook his fist at Tim and yelled oaths enough to shake a meeting-house down.

"Want any more mule-meat?"

"If I had hold of yer I'd make mince-meat of yer." "Ta-ta! Be good to yourself, old man!" were Tim's parting words, as he rode away.

As for the tramp, he wasn't in half so good a condition to walk as he was before he had his little experience with the mule, and if he is still "tramping along" he probably remembers the affair, and it is safe to say that he has never tackled one of them since.

But this made Tim and the mule even better friends than before, and he could do almost anything in the world with him, as the clown of the circus knew to his sorrow.

One of Tim's greatest sources of amusement was to mingle in the crowd which always gathers in anxious numbers around the ticket wagon, all eager to get their tickets first, and to listen to their expressions of chaffing or disgust.

But one evening he had another kind of an adventure which afforded him and the company heaps of amusement.

It was on the occasion of a second night's performance at Portland, Me., and Tim was dressed as a negro wench to carry out his part of the business with the clown and mule.

It was several minutes before the ticket office was opened, but there was a crowd already gathered around it, many of whom were there out of simple curiosity; but among them there were several colored people, a few of them being what is called "dandy darks," or "mashers."

One of these dandy darks spotted Tim as he stood gazing at the crowd, and thinking to mash "her" out of her senses almost, he edged up to where he stood, and spoke:

"Dish yer am-a mos' delightful ebenin', miss," he began.

Tim "tumbled" to the snap right away.

"Yes, sah, a mos' delicious ebenin'," said he, and being dressed quite nicely, as well as being a good actor, he made the youthful darkey's heart leap, as he spoke.

"War you on de point ob goin' inter de circus?" he asked next.

"Yes, sah, I war contemplating such a pleasant disposition ob my spar time dis ebenin'."

"Hab you any company?"

"No, sah. Unfortunately I am a stranger in Portland, habing jus' come from Boston, an' I's 'bliged fer ter go alone."

"Might I hab de extreme felicity ob bein' your escort on dis propitious occasion?"

"If you please, sah, I shall be exceedingly obliged to you fo' your politeness," said Tim.

"No mo' so den I shall be by de lubly condesenshun on you' part ob acceptin' ob my humble escortation. Excuse me jus' one moment an' I will procure tickets ob admisterations fo' us both," said he, bowing politely.

"You honor me, sah."

"An' you paralyze me wid delightfulness. But one moment an' I fly back to you' side again," he replied, and then turning away, he began pushing towards the wagon, which was just then opened.

"There's a mash," thought Tim, "and now I'll have some fun with him."

"Oh! I guess not!" chuckled the dandy dark, "I'd like to see de wench dat I can't mash! I'll jus' paralyze her afo' I get through with her."

After struggling for a few minutes he finally managed to get the tickets, after which he went back to where Tim was standing, and offering his arm, escorted her with a great flourish to the entrance of the tent.

"Let us get as near to de ring as possible, so dat we can see it all," said Tim.

"Certainly, miss—miss—I beg pardon."

"Miss Timothy, please," said Tim.

"Oh, thank you kindly, Miss Timothy. My cognomen am Johnsing, George Washington Johnsing."

"Thank you, Mr. Johnsing; you are berry kind."

"Dat's because I am so berry much obliged, an' de desire ob you' heart to be near to de ampetheater shall be gratified to de fullest extent," said he, lifting his hat with a great flourish.

The next moment they had passed the ticket-taker, and knowing exactly where to go to be in the right place, Tim led the way down towards the front, and finally took a seat directly by the edge of the ring.

Then they began to buzz each other, both doing their heaviest and best to crush each other completely. And they soon succeeded in attracting considerable attention from the gathering audience before the performance commenced, calling out several expressions more comical than polite.

They saw that it was a mash on the part of Mr. Johnson, who was well known in the city as a dandy barber, and so they chaffed him, greatly to his disgust, but to the delight of his enemies of his own color.

Tim saw the racket, and did all he could in a quiet way to keep it going.

"Am dem remarks directed at us, Mr. Johnsing?" he finally asked.

"Miss Timothy, I am sorry to say that I fear they are. De fact is, I have a great many rivals in dis city, an' seeing me so nearly into you' good graces, they are angry."

"How shocking!"

"Oh, but they are very common, vulgar people, I assure you."

"How I dislike such people, Mr. Johnsing."

"Ob course you do, Miss Timothy, fo' all high bred people like ourselves dislike such things. But it am all jealousy, I assure you."

"The horrid creatures!"

"How I would like to punish them for your sweet sake," said he, tenderly.

"Oh, don't mind me, Mr. Johnsing."

But the chaffing continued until the show began, during which time everybody in the tent had their attention directed towards them which was just what suited Tim.

Well, the performance went on until the educated mule was brought out, and the clown went through with his funny business in connection with the ring-master.

Finally the clown made the usual announcement, offering the reward of fifty dollars to any person who would successfully ride the animal once around the ring.

"Mr. Johnsing, will you 'scuse me a moment?" asked Tim.

"Certainly, Miss Timothy; but—"

"I'se gwine fo' ter scoop dat fifty."

"What am dat you say?"

"I'se gwine ter try ter ride dat mule."

"Goodness gracious, Miss Timothy!" he exclaimed, starting up in astonishment.

"Dat's de sort ob a hair-pin I am."

"But only think ob it!"

"So I hab. Hallelu, Mr. Clown!" he called, rising up in his seat and creating great excitement.

"What is the matter with you, Dinah?" asked the clown.

"Will you let me try fo' dat fifty?"

"Certainly. Sex, color, or previous condition not considered here," he replied.

"My dear lady!" whispered her escort, pulling her dress, anxiously.

"Shut up, Mr. Johnsing. I'se gwine fo' dat fifty dollars," said Tim, breaking away from him and leaping into the ring.

Thunders upon thunders of applause followed this, one-half of which, and especially the laughing and jeering part, was directed to Mr. Johnson, the most abashed and dumbfounded man that was ever seen, whether black or white. In fact, he was completely overwhelmed.

Meanwhile Tim had straddled the mule, amid a continuation of laughter and applause, which was so loud that not a word that was spoken in the ring could be heard by anybody.

And Tim was bounced and tumbled around the ring at a fearful rate, creating the wildest merriment, half of which was at the expense of the paralyzed dandy nig.

But, of course, Tim did not succeed in riding the mule around the track.

"What makes dat yer animile so wabbly, Mr. Clown?" he finally asked.

"We feed him on yeast cakes. Did you get seriously injured?"

"No, but I got seriously mussed up. Bust all my corset strings."

This, of course, produced another laugh.

"Of course it's hard work."

"Yes, an' I stays heah no longer," said Tim, turning and running out of the tent, followed by loud laughter.

As for that dandy dark, he was the sickest man in the city of Portland, and now that his supposed "mash" had skipped out, the audience turned upon him.

"Why don't you go after your girl?"

"Go help her mend her corsets."

"Where is your 'mash,' Johnson?" and various other things were shouted at him.

And it wasn't until another portion of the performance came into the ring that they let up on the poor devil, who would gladly have sneaked out of the tent had he not feared that they would chaff him even worse than if he remained.

But that wasn't the worst of it for him, for some of the circus men gave the whole thing away, and the result was that the poor devil was actually laughed out of town in less than a week afterwards.

And so our friend Tim managed to have heaps of fun, and, of course, it was no wonder that he enjoyed that sort of life.

But he sometimes went in deeper, and sold his best friends, as he did when the company were performing at Dexter, in the same State.

Writing out the following notice for one of the papers published there, he had it inserted:

"Mr. Lent, being desirous of getting a stock of grain and provisions for his animals, will take oats, corn, potatoes, pumpkins, squash, and all sorts of farm produce in exchange for admission to his circus, paying the regular market price therefor. A few hundred dozen fresh eggs will also be taken for his trained horses."

That notice made a hit!

No announcement could have been so welcome to those frugal and thrifty down-easters, for they have but little money, anyway, and they dreadfully hate to part with any of it, so everybody rushed the next afternoon to the circus with all sorts of provisions and produce, demanding tickets of admission therefor, and creating a tremendous sensation and confusion.

There was a perfect drove of country carts and whole families who came to town from all the surrounding country, some of them coming a distance of five and ten miles away.

The ticket-seller was wild, and so was Mr. Lent, who could not understand the meaning of the business at all.

In vain he protested and informed the indignant crowd that he had never put out such an announcement, and that if such an one had been put out it was without his sanction; that he didn't want any produce of any kind, more especially vegetables and eggs.

But they wouldn't have it for a cent. They said they had acted in good faith, and if he didn't let them in according to agreement they would tear his tents down and bust up the show.

So he was obliged to take the stuff they brought and admit them to his show, greatly to his disgust and in-

dignation, for there were so many of them that they nearly filled the tent full, leaving no place for cash customers.

Tim laughed to himself, and thought it one of the best things he ever heard of, but he took care not to let anybody know how the thing came about.

CHAPTER V.

It was during the stay of the circus at Halifax, Nova Scotia, that a little "funny business" occurred, where in Tim enacted the hero, which I think might be recorded at this time and be pretty sure of a laugh.

There being no large hotels near to the site where the tents were to be pitched, the advance agent had engaged board for the various members of the troupe at several small taverns not far away, and to one of the smallest of these Tumbling Tim and Smith, the clown, were assigned, there being only room enough for two.

But after Smith had taken a look at the place he concluded to hunt up another hostelry of a little better grade, even if it was further away, and he did so, without, however, saying anything about it to anybody.

Well, that night, after the show was over, Tim went off with several of the performers to enjoy a little fun, and it was not until nearly midnight that he brought up to the hotel.

Now it must be remembered that the landlord of this place was a lazy, sleepy sort of a fellow, and by the time that Tim got there he was half asleep from waiting and the generous quantity of malt whisky which he had taken in during the day.

In addition to this he knew but little about his business anyhow, his wife attending to it for the most part, leaving him to look to it as best he could, after she got tired out.

"Young feller, you're late," said he, gruffly.

"Well, yes, a little. Has Smith gone to bed?" asked Tim, taking the candle which the sleepily landlord handed him.

"Yes, of course; every honest man is abed before this time. Can you find your way up?"

"I guess so. Which room is it?"

"First door to your right at the head of the stairs. You can't miss it."

"All right. Call us at seven in the morning."

"Oh, you'll be routed out, never fear."

Tim then started up-stairs as quietly as possible for fear of waking Smith, who was always as ugly as a dog with a sore head if awakened out of his sleep.

Reaching the right room, as he supposed, he saw somebody lying in the bed with only a sheet over him, and which covered his whole body, head and all; but as it was a very hot night, and this a favorite way of sleeping with the clown, he thought nothing of it, but proceeded softly to undress himself, after which he blew out the candle and crept gently into the bed behind his fellow.

"Confound him, what a hog he is," thought Tim. "Here he lies right in the middle of the bed and never offers to budge. But I suppose I must make the most of it, for he is such a confounded ugly fellow that I dare not disturb him."

So he got under the sheet as quietly as possible, avoiding touching him for fear of a growl, and cuddling down, he was soon lost in sleep.

But he was aroused a few minutes later by hearing the door of their room open softly, and presently there entered with a candle a young man and a young lady.

Tim didn't exactly understand this; but thinking that perhaps they had made a mistake, and would soon discover it, he kept perfectly quiet.

The fellow proceeded to the table and set his candle upon it, but in such a way that a shadow was cast upon the bed, and then turning to the young lady, who kept close by his side, he said:

"They have left their candle here."

"Yes;" and she cast a sidelong glance at the bed.

What the dickens did it mean, anyway?

"Let's sit down here by the window."

"Yes, and let me sit close to you, George, for I am so nervous."

"Nonsense, my dear, there is nothing to be nervous about. Here, I will sit here and you can sit beside me;" and they proceeded to so arrange themselves, greatly to Tim's astonishment.

"Are you afraid of ghosts, birdie?"

"N—no, not if you are near me, George."

"Well, I will always be near you, dearest, and nothing shall ever frighten you again;" and he drew her nearer to him, and then followed a smack which could not be imitated by anything except a genuine kiss.

"Well, this is rich," thought Tim. "Wonder how they will feel when they find they have made a mistake and got into a room with two men?"

"Oh, George!" he heard her murmur.

"Oo is my own woutsy-poutsy, isn't 'oo?"

"Es I be."

Then Tim heard another smack—one of those long drawn ones, which remind a fellow of pulling molasses candy.

"Yum—yum—yum!" George breathed, fervently; and then he tried to see if it was possible to draw her any closer to him.

"Oh, George!"

"Darling, you have made me so happy to-day by promising to be my wife, and I can't forget my happiness, even in a place like this."

As this spoony business was becoming warmer and warmer all the time, Tim thought he would nudge his bed-fellow, and let him enjoy it with him.

So he nudged him slightly, but as that did not rouse him, he took hold of his arm to shake him.

Heavens above! The limb was cold and stiff. Pulling the sheet from the face of the figure, he saw that he was in bed with a corpse!

For an instant he was paralyzed with fear, but finally recovering himself somewhat, he gave a yell and leaped from the bed.

"Murder—murder!" he shouted, and darted out of the room, clothed only in a short shirt.

But if Tim was frightened, how about the lovers who had volunteered to sit up one-half of the night with the corpse!

The frightened young lady screamed even louder than Tim did, and then wholly overcome with fear at the supposed conduct of the corpse, she proceeded to faint away.

The lover was almost as nearly paralyzed as she was, but taking her in his arms, he dragged her downstairs, where by this time Tim had succeeded in getting up the liveliest sort of an excitement.

"Didn't I tell you to go into the first door to the right?"

"Yes, but I—I—"

"But you made a mistake, and got into the wrong room and into bed with a dead man."

"Y—yes."

"Well, you must be a fool, that's all I can say," said the landlord, not knowing the circumstances of the case, "and what is more, you have nearly frightened the life out of those people who came here to sit up with the dead man. Now go to bed in your own room."

"No, thank you," replied Tim, making a dive for his clothes. "No more sleep for me in this house."

"Well, go down and sleep on one of the bar-room bunks, then. You have made a nice muss in the house, and there won't be another wink's sleep here

Among the great attractions connected with the menagerie was the celebrated elephant, Romeo, in his day the largest performing elephant in the world, and even now that he is dead, it may be doubted if so fine an animal exists as he was.

This new feature of the business proved a big thing for Tim, for he had always been fond of animals, and the idea of being connected with both a circus and menagerie filled the cup of his happiness full.

And even after the novelty of the thing wore off, he still enjoyed heaps of fun by wandering through the tent where the animals were kept, and listening to the comments of the countrymen while viewing them, and laughing over the serio-comic shout of the "lecturer," as the man was called who described the animals to the gaping crowd.



But the elephant held him there in a grip from which there was no escape, while all sorts of cries came from the audience.

Everybody in the tavern was aroused, and came running into the bar-room.

"What is it—what's the matter?" demanded the landlord, who was as much frightened as any of them.

"Smith—" said Tim, trembling there in his shirt-tail.

"What of him?"

"He is dead! Run for Mr. Lent."

"Dead?"

"Yes."

"And Mr. Duncan has returned to life," said George, who still held the fainting girl.

"What the devil does it all mean?"

"Go up-stairs and see."

The landlord took a candle and started up-stairs, followed by the others, although not one of them was there who did not have shaky knees.

They entered the chamber tremblingly.

There lay the corpse of Duncan, just the same as ever.

"Now let us see about Smith," said the landlord, turning to an opposite chamber.

"Why—" and Tim hesitated.

The room was found empty.

"What is the meaning of all this?" asked the bewildered landlord.

"Why—why—I—I—I thought that was Mr. Smith," said Tim, gazing around from one to another in a bewildered manner.

"You thought so?"

"Y—yes—where is he?"

"Hang me if I know, but was you in bed with that corpse?"

"Y—ye—yes," stammered Tim.

"The devil you say!"

"Y—yes."

Tim felt as cold as the corpse itself.

to-night, confound you!" and he turned to go downstairs.

But Tim kept close at his heels, for he had no notion of being left alone with that "bed-fellow" again, even for ever so short a time. And reaching the bar-room, he proceeded to dress himself, and to receive the curses and laughter of those assembled.

As for the watchers, that occurrence took all the love, the romance, the duty, and almost everything else out of them, and just as soon as the frightened young lady recovered sufficiently, her "George" took her home, leaving the dead man to look out for himself.

True enough, there was no more sleep in that house during the remainder of that night, for everybody had got such a thorough fright that sleep would not come again.

But all the while it was a mystery to Tim what had become of Smith, the clown, although the general opinion was that he had gone somewhere else without notifying the landlord or anybody else.

The next morning Tim proved this to be the case, but when he told the company of his adventure, you may be sure that there was big laughter at his expense.

Nothing of any particular importance happened (although they had more or less fun wherever they went) until they returned to the United States, where they were joined by another circus troupe and a menagerie at Ogdensburg, New York.

This other company had been playing in some of the smaller towns, but as the season grew and the country was full of shows, this combination was arranged for the purpose of making up a big show so that they could go into the large cities and hold their own with the best of them.

And this they were fully able to do, for it was now without doubt the largest show, there was on the road, although Tim held his old position, and as usual, created his share of the fun.

This "lecturer" was an Englishman, and a more original cuss at his business never left the land of ale and roast beef.

"Right this way, ladies and gentlemen, and allow me to present to your h'astonished notice the Royal Bengal Tiger," he would call, at the same time approaching the cage of a sleepy old tiger who hadn't spunk enough to do anything but to eat, and growl while doing so. "This 'ere h'animal, ladies and gents, inhabits the wild jungles h'of h'India, where he crouches in h'awful majesty, h'and h'awaits the h'approach h'of 'is prey. 'E h'often h'engages in h'awful combat with bowie constrictors a 'undred feet long, h'and generally succeeds h'in taking the kinks h'out h'of that h'exaggerated worm, h'and h'of dining upon h'its quivering flesh. The h'awful h'animal, which you see before you, is sleepy just now, 'aving gorged himself on one 'undred pounds h'of the best sirloin steak, which we 'ave to give 'im every twenty-four hours h'in order to keep 'im from breaking from his cage h'and feasting 'is h'awful propensities upon 'uman flesh."

And so he would go through the entire menagerie, descanting upon the animals in such a style, causing the educated to laugh, but always catching the countrymen, in whose eyes the beasts became even more savage and grand than they were in their native jungles. I could give whole columns of his harangue, but for the present, let this suffice, although I may give more specimens further on.

Tim enjoyed all this, and the wonder that the man excited among the spectators—this part of the show coming off after the circus performance.

And they frequently came upon very "fresh" people, especially among those who went in to see the animals—fellows who pretended to know all about them, and, in fact, everything else.

Tim told me of one of those fellows whom they encountered at Rochester.

He attended the circus with his wife and three or

four children, and at its close went into the tent where the animals were.

Here he swaggered around among the cages, making sarcastic remarks about the animals, and claiming to have seen much better in New York, where, he took particular pains to say over and over again, loud enough to be heard by everybody, he had lived for years, and become disgusted with anything in the curiosity line, on account of having seen so much and seen it so often.

He was loud of voice, big of swagger, and, in order to show his utter contempt for what were supposed to be ferocious animals, he would treat each one to a squirt of tobacco juice, of which he seemed to have a plentiful supply.

His wife and children evidently looked upon him as a hero—a great man; one who wasn't afraid of anything, and so did a few of his friends who were present.

Finally he approached the elephant, Romeo, and began to descend upon its insignificance.

"Bah! call that an elephant? He ain't no more than a double-tail cow, anyhow," said he, at the same time squirting some tobacco juice upon the animal's trunk. "I've seen elephants five times as big as that" (notwithstanding the fact that Romeo was the largest animal of his species ever exhibited). "He's snide, he is. Call this a me-nagerie! Worst old cow I ever seen!"

"Stand back there, ladies and gentlemen, for the elephant will not be trifled with!" said the "lecturer," calling to those who stood around.

"Ah, what are you giving us?" shouted Mr. Fresh. "That elephant can't hurt a cat," and this created a laugh.

"All right, my friend; he may not be able to hurt a cat, but he's death on jackasses!" and this aroused a hearty laugh at the expense of Mr. Fresh, which greatly nettled him.

"Oh, you go to thunder!" said he, at the same time squirting a stream of tobacco juice right into Romeo's eye.

The elephant was mad, but like all animals of this species, he made no immediate demonstration, only shaking his head and flapping his big ears, and probably he kept up a devil of a thinking.

"Whoa! Romeo, you fiery, untamed animal. What's the matter with you? Don't you like tobacco? Whoa!" he yelled, at which there was quite a laugh.

He himself threw back his head and let out a roar that was heard all over the tent, and maybe excited the envy of the African lion.

But before he had got half through with it, Romeo swept toward him with his trunk.

The next instant Mr. Fresh was seized around the middle and lifted into the air.

Instantly there was the wildest excitement, and everybody gathered around, while the wife and children of the victim yelled at the top of their voices.

"Oh—oh—oh!" cried Mr. Fresh. "Drop me! I—I—I—oh!"

"Save him—save him! oh! save him!" cried Mrs. Fresh, while the children yelled four or five different kinds of murder, and implored Romeo to let up on their daddy and let him down.

But the elephant held him there, fully twelve feet from the ground; held him in a grip from which there was no escape, while all sorts of cries came from the audience.

"Murder—murder!" yelled the victim.

"Help—help!" echoed his wife.

"Let pop down!" cried his children.

"Drop him!" yelled several spectators, but Romeo persisted in holding his victim aloft, as stationary as though he had been lashed to a mast.

"Ladies and gentlemen, Romeo has been h'insulted, and this h'is 'is revenge," shouted the "lecturer."

"Make him drop him!"

"Shoot him!"

"Choke him!"

"Touch a match to his tail!"

"Stick a carpet tack in him!"

"Check his trunk!"

"Save him! oh, save him!"

"Help—help—help!"

"Bore a hole in him!"

"Saw his legs off!"

"Club him!" and a dozen other calls resounded through the tent, accompanied by a wild rush and the most intense excitement.

"Romeo, drop him!" called his keeper, but Romeo appeared to know what he was about, and didn't propose to be instructed.

Again the calls of the crowd became almost deafening, and once more the keeper attempted to make him drop his victim.

But the elephant, to show his contempt for the keeper as well as for the others, made a sweep downward with his trunk, and using Mr. Fresh as a sort of slung-shot, he knocked the keeper three or four times his length, sprawling on the ground, after which he raised the now limp Mr. Fresh again, and held him high above the heads of the excited crowd.

The keeper picked himself up with some difficulty, but seeing the hopelessness of attempting to force the beast, he ran for a basket of apples and began to coax him to drop his victim for the sake of the apples.

This he finally consented to do, but not until Mr. Fresh had the wind nearly squeezed out of him, together with a large amount of his conceit, although he was in no condition to tell exactly how he felt, whether penitent or all broken up.

The affair created the wildest sensation all over town, but considering the fact that Romeo had killed several men, it was looked upon as a very lucky escape from death.

But when it came to be understood that this man had squirted tobacco-juice into the animal's eyes, it was generally voted that the elephant was the most

sensible of the two, and that Mr. Fresh had got only what he deserved.

As for Mr. Fresh, it is safe to say that he minded where he squirted his tobacco-juice when attending any other show where there was an uncaged elephant, and most likely lost much of his freshness on account of the experience which he had on this occasion.

He afterwards tried to explain how it happened, but it was too late. People understood it all, and the only sympathy he got was suggestions from all sides that he get some salt for himself.

Of course the affair created a great deal of fun for the company, which lasted them to laugh over for many a week afterwards, and Tumbling Tim enjoyed it quite as much as any of the rest of them.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM Rochester the combination of circuses and menagerie went to Troy, where they were advertised to hold forth for three nights.

The commingling of the circuses with the great menagerie made up a grand show, and the public appreciated it, although our friend Tumbling Tim was never lost sight of, and the sport he occasioned in connection with the educated mule was one of the features of every performance as usual.

But it must be understood that the educated mule was not the only animal of the kind that there was connected with this great show, although he was the only aristocratic mule belonging to it.

Connected with the luggage department there were five or six of these patient, useful animals, although they were only ordinary draught mules, and educated only in pulling wagons for the provender that was given them.

Strange as it may appear, one of those ordinary mules got mad or disgusted one fine day, and up and died. It is said that a mule never dies, but that is a mistake. This mule actually made his last kick in kicking the bucket in the real old-fashioned way.

Mr. Lent had the carcass carefully skinned, with a view of stuffing it or of making it otherwise useful, and a bright idea struck Tumbling Tim, which was this—he wanted to play a trick on the clown.

In order to do this he arranged with two of the teamsters, who also thought that it would be high old fun to get into this mule skin, one to do the fore legs and the other the hind legs, and go into the ring instead of the trick mule when the clown called for him.

The affair was all cut and dried on the dead quiet, and at Hudson they worked it.

"Bring forth my fiery, untamed steed!" shouted the clown, and out trotted the made-up mule as natural as life.

"Whoa, Emma!" he cried, leaping upon the back of the "animal."

Now this sudden bounce rather staggered the two fellows, and Smith himself thought the mule's back felt somewhat strange and shaky, but the next instant he felt something else, for the chap who was playing the hind legs suddenly poked a long needle up into him about an inch.

Uttering a yell, he leaped into the air and fell head over heels into the sawdust, while the "mule" turned and ran out into the entree tent.

If the clown was surprised, the ringmaster was nearly as much so, while the audience roared at what was supposed to be a piece of the clown's funny business.

Smith picked himself up, and while gazing around in a bewildered sort of way, he rubbed himself smartly.

"Well, Mr. Merryman, what sort of a performance is this you are giving us?" asked the ringmaster, the first to speak.

"I give it up, master," replied the clown, gazing towards the exit door; "I think that mule wears spurs."

"Well, you didn't appear to need any spur to assist you to get off his back."

"No, I had all the spur I wanted. Here! send that mule back again!" he called.

A good portion of the people in the audience "tumbled" that a trick of some kind had been played on the clown, and a running fire of laughter was kept up at his expense.

One of the attendants (who was also in the racket) brought in the regular mule, and both he and the four-legged animal seemed to have a grin on their faces.

Going cautiously up to the mule, Smith ran his hand along his back and sides to see if he could find what had pricked him, but of course the beast was all right, and the clown greatly mystified about it.

"What seems to be the matter with your steed?" asked the ringmaster.

"Well, he seems to be decidedly *unsteady*."

"Yes; he was evidently having some fun with you."

"Yes, I guess he was; for, at all events, I feel sure that if there was any fun he must have had it, for I didn't. Whoa, Emma! What's the matter with you?" he asked, and the mule began his funny business.

"He appears to be in good working order now?"

"I'll give him one more trial, and if he don't pan out better I'll give him a character and turn him over to you."

"Turn him over! Indeed, sir, he seems to have the faculty of turning you over."

"Yes, he is something of a cook, and knew that I was done on one side," replied the clown, leaping upon the mule's back.

Everything was all right now, and still wondering what it was that pricked him so, he began his business.

His first impression was that Tim or somebody had

played a trick on him by placing a carpet-tack or something upon the mule's back, leaving it point upwards ready for business, and he resolved to get terribly even with them if he could only find them out.

Meanwhile the two fellows who had played the racket on him had gotten out of the muleskin, and put it away out of sight.

Of course quite a number of the company found out about the affair, but as the joke was so good, and Smith was so fond of playing practical jokes on other people, they kept quiet about it, so far as giving it away was concerned, although they laughed and gaped the poor clown about it for a long time afterwards.

At Poughkeepsie, another city on the Hudson river, they showed for two days, and not only did a big business, but Tim had heaps of fun, as he contrived to do nearly everywhere.

But it was in the menagerie that he saw the most to laugh at, besides being very fond of the animals and curiosities, and it was not long before he had made friends with them all, from the elephant down to the white mice.

At Poughkeepsie a large number of the surrounding farmers came to see the show, especially at the afternoon performance, and Tim could always hear and have more fun with this class of patrons than with any other, for, being generally inside of the ropes, behind which two cages were stationed, they would take him for one of the keepers, and ask him all sorts of questions.

These he would answer in all sorts of ways, just as he happened to feel, or according to his customer.

"Say, yu chap, what sort of a critter is that 'ere?" asked an old lady from the country, pointing to the zebra with a big blue cotton umbrella.

"That, marm, is a Sing Sing horse," replied Tim, looking as honest as a clam.

"A Sing Sing hoss? Yu don't say so?"

"Fact, I assure you. Don't you see his striped suit?"

"Waal, I swanny! Here, Betsy," she called, turning to her daughter, who was gazing at the animals with open eyes and mouth. "see this 'ere state prison hoss; I never hearn of one before."

"I've hearn tell of 'state prison birds,' but I never hearn tell of a state prison hoss," said her daughter, seriously.

"What does the critter eat?"

"Nothing but striped bass, marm."

"Goodness me! Who ever hearn tell of a hoss eating fish?"

"Well, you see he has to depend upon it to keep his stripes in working order," said Tim.

"Will he eat anything that's striped?"

"Certainly."

"Look out an' don't let him see them stockin's of yourn, Betsy," said the old lady, and they presently moved along to another cage.

"Is that a horse?" asked a young fellow from the rural districts, coming up to Tim soon after the other two questioners had left.

"Yes, sir; regular horse."

"Thunder! how queer he's marked."

"Yes; a great natural curiosity."

"But it says 'zebra' up there on the cage."

"Oh, that is the horse's name, that's all."

"Goodness gracious!" he muttered, and then walked slowly away.

Then an old fellow came along with half a dozen children, to whom he was explaining the various animals.

"And this, children, is the zebra, or the striped horse of Africa. They are very fleet animals, and can outrun the reindeer. They always sleep with one eye open, and are never caught napping, that is to say, they only take half a nap at a time. Now let us go and see the giraffe," said he, moving on, followed by his wondering pupils.

This being rather amusing, Tim concluded to follow up this wonderful lecturer on natural history and hear what he had to say. Arriving at the cage where the long-necked animal was, they stopped, and he began:

"This is the giraff, children. He is also a native of Africa, and is supposed to enjoy his food better than any other animal, excepting the stork, owing to having such a long neck, which enables him to taste it longer. He was made on purpose to pasture on the tops of trees, and to knock down the fruit for man, and help himself to birds' nests. And this is the camel, that is spoken of in the Bible," he added, passing along.

"Nonsense; he arn't so old as that," said Tim, who stood behind him.

That teacher of youth turned upon him with a frown that was intended to be paralyzing, but made no reply.

"Yes, children, the camels are called the 'ships of the desert,' and are used as beasts of burden."

"What's that hump on his back?" asked one of the little boys.

"Well, when Noah had all the animals in the ark, some of the larger ones crowded the camels up into a corner and abused them most shamefully, and naturalists tell us that they got their backs up about it, and that they have stayed up ever since that man might have positive proof that there had been a flood. He always carries his provisions with him in a patent pouch, which he slings on the inside of his neck. Now let us view the elephant," he added.

"This, children, is the elephant, the largest animal in the world. He has a very long nose, you will observe, which is called a trunk."

"What does he keep in it?" asked a boy.

"He don't blow his nose, does he?" asked another.

"No, he uses it to eat and drink with."

"Sort of a suction hose," suggested Tim.

"Young man, you will please mind your own business," said the lecturer, frowning upon him.

"All right, boss, but I'm trying to learn something," replied Tim.

"Well, be good enough to keep quiet and listen, then."

"Go it, old man."

"Be more respectful in your language, or I shall call a keeper to put you out."

"What are those white things sticking out of that end of him?" asked one of the children, pointing to the elephant's tusks.

"Those are tusks," said the man.

"I know what they are for," said another.

"What do you think they are for, Willie?"

"He keeps 'em to hang his trunk on," replied Willie, proudly.

"No, men make ivory of them."

with that man, he had to be smart in order to keep his end up, for he was thoroughly posted, and had a quick answer for everybody.

Interest just then centered around the monkey cage, where a very fresh young man was having considerable to say about them. In fact, he was just then having a controversy with the keeper, because that individual objected to his stirring the animals up with his stick.

"They ain't no good monkeys anyway. I've seen any quantity of 'em down in Brazil," said he, turning to the crowd.

"Used to associate with them, didn't you?" asked the keeper.

"Yes, of course I did."

of the cage where the monkeys were now eating their supper.

"I say."

"What?"

"Do you think I am afraid of monkeys?"

"Yes."

"I'll soon show you," said he, climbing up into the cage.

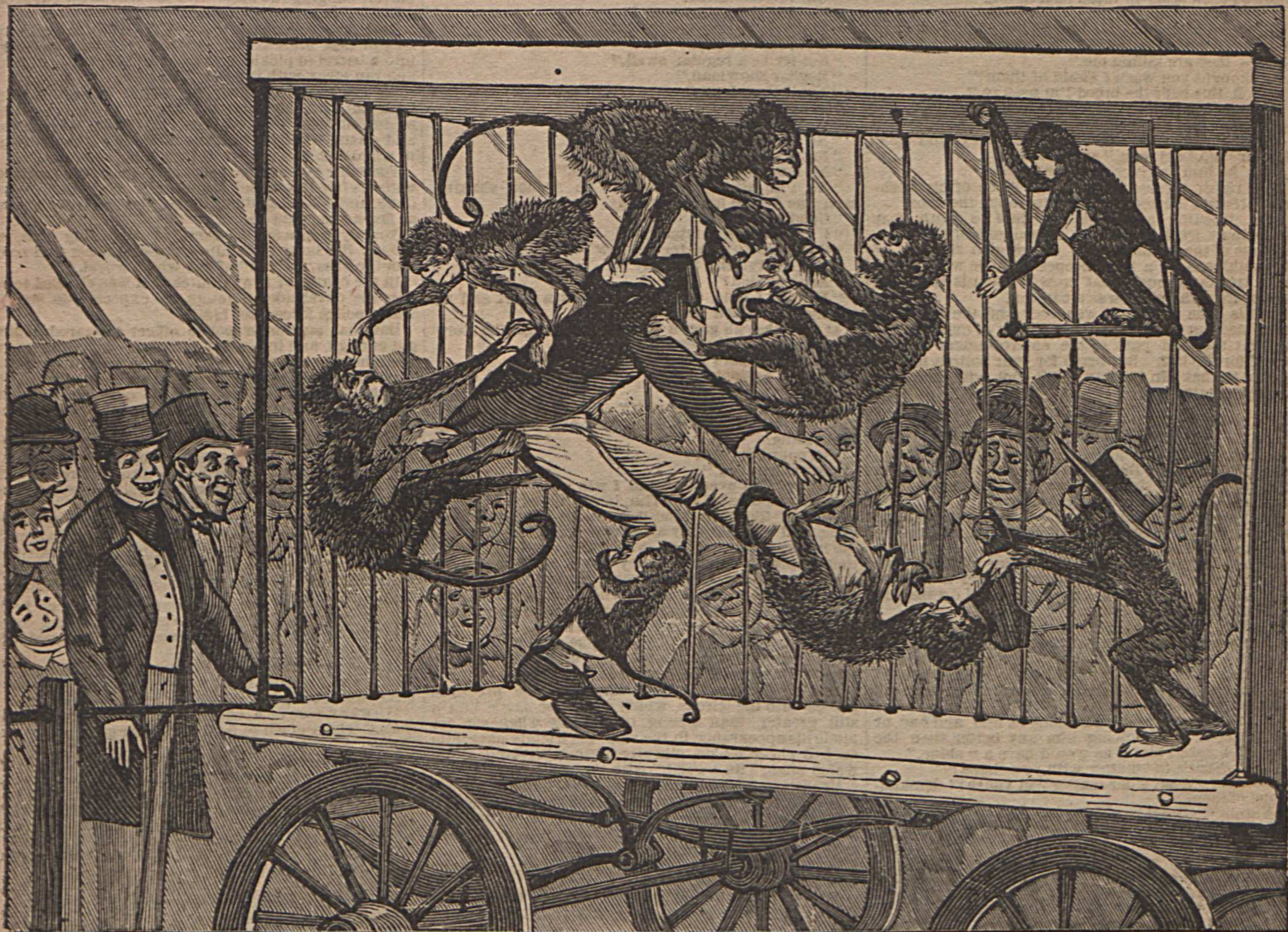
"What are you going to do?"

"Have a little fun with the monkeys."

"He wants to shake hands with his relations," yelled somebody in the throng.

"And they want to hug their big brother," suggested somebody else.

"See how much they look alike," another person blurted out.



"Lemme out!" he yelled, at the same time kicking and striking on all sides. "Oh, stay there and have some fun with the monkeys," said the keeper.

"Yes, and fine toothed combs," exclaimed a little girl, who had evidently trained with one of those useful articles.

The lecturer smiled.

"What do they do with their skins?" asked the inquisitive Willie.

"They use it to make dead helephants with," said another.

"What do you mean?" asked the man.

"I seed one once tu Barnum's Museum; a helephant stuffed with straw."

"Very true, my boy, they do make dead elephants of their skins."

Then they passed along to the cage containing the "Happy Family," that is, a cage in which all kinds of animals are kept together; animals who are supposed to be enemies to each other, but who live peacefully together in the cage.

Here the man lectured again, about as wildly as before, and gave those children more information than they could get out of books.

But Tim finally got tired of it and went to where a crowd stood around the elephant, Romeo.

"Jerusalem crickets!" exclaimed a countryman, looking at the beast. "Isn't ue a insect, though? By gracious, what a critter! Thunderation! I say, mister, how much does he eat?" he added, turning to the regular lecturer.

"One ton of hay per day, sir," replied that truthful individual without a smile.

"He also drinks one hogshead of water at every meal," said the lecturer.

"Great smoke!" exclaimed the countryman.

"No, sir; he does not smoke."

"What does he pick his teeth with?" asked a would-be funny man in the crowd.

"With the center-pole of the circus tent," replied the lecturer, without a smile.

This, of course, produced a laugh, and the smart young man slunk away. If anybody wanted to be fresh

"How they must miss you, my friend," said the keeper, turning away.

Mr. Smarty got well laughed at, but he didn't appear to notice it.

"Can't tell me anything about monkeys," he added, with a swagger.

Tim took it all in.

Going to the keeper, he said.

"I say, cully!"

"What?"

"Let's have some fun with that chap."

"How?"

"You go into the cage and feed the monkeys, and leave the door open. I will chin him into going in, too, and then you can slip out—see?"

"All right; work it," said the keeper, going for the monkey-food.

Tim turned to the judge of monkeys.

"I agree with you, mister; they aren't no sort of monkeys," said he.

"Of course they arn't. The show's a swindle," replied the fellow, glad to get somebody to talk to.

"I say, the keeper's going to feed 'em. Go into the cage when he does, and show what you can do."

"The fellow might kick."

"No, he won't."

"Think so?"

"No, he thinks you are afraid of them."

"But you bet I arn't, though."

"Of course not."

"I have played with monkeys four times as big as them."

"There he goes, and he has left the door open. Go in and show him and the folks that you are not afraid," urged Tim.

"I've a good mind to," said he, for it was very evident that he loved to show off.

"Go ahead!"

The fellow got under the rope and went to the door

Of course, any amount of laughter followed these sallies, and nearly everybody in the place crowded in front of the cage.

"All right; have some fun with them," said the keeper, jumping down out of the cage and slamming the door shut.

Thus shut it was fastened, and there stood Mr. Smarty alone with the monkeys, who at once set up a wild chattering, and began scampering around the cage, for those animals dislike strangers, although their regular keeper, with whom they are acquainted and who feeds them, can do almost anything with them.

"Now, then, old man, show us some fun," cried Tim.

"Cut up some monkey shines."

"Shake hands with your family!"

"Kiss him for his mother!"

"Let out your tail so they will know you!"

"See how much alike they look!"

"He's the boss monkey, after all."

"Hire yourself out and travel with the rest of your family," and dozens of such things were hurled at him, while the monkeys were screaming and chattering all around the cage.

"On, you chaps think you are awful smart, don't you?" he sneered, turning towards the laughing, excited crowd.

"Oh, go on with your fun!"

"Start your performance."

"Shake hands with your oldest brother."

"Daniel in the monkey's den!"

"They won't hurt him; he's one of the same breed, and monkeys are not cannibals," said the keeper, laughing.

"Stir up the animals."

"All right, I'll do it," said he, kicking one of the nearest to him.

He had occasion to kick some more just after that, for the whole swarm of them now went for him.

They climbed all over him; the knocked his hat off

and took turns jumping into it; they bit him in about twenty places at once, all the while making an unearthly chatter.

Smarty slathered around him at a lively rate for some time, but they soon got the best of him, decidedly, and he began to call the keeper to let him out, while the crowd yelled with delight and called it a family row.

"Lemme out!" he yelled, at the same time kicking and striking on all sides.

"Oh, stay there and have some fun with the monkeys," said the keeper.

"Go it, little ones!"

"See how they love their big brother!"

"Lemme out!"

Tell 'em who you are," and dozens of other calls followed each other in rapid succession.

"Will you lemme out?"

"Do you think you have had all the 'fun' you want to with the monkeys?" asked the keeper.

"Yes, they are killing me."

"I thought you wasn't afraid of them?"

"Well, this isn't the breed I'm used to."

"No, they aren't used to two-legged monkeys."

"Lemme out, or I'll shout murder."

"Don't; you might frighten the monkeys and spoil all your 'fun,' old man," said somebody.

"Oh, let him out," cried several ladies.

"All right; I guess he has lost some of his freshness," replied the keeper, throwing open the door.

Torn, bleeding, and frightened half to death, that exceedingly fresh individual leaped out of the cage, with one of the monkeys still clinging to the seat of his pantaloons, or a little deeper, and the way he did make tracks through that crowd towards the door leading from the place was a caution.

By this time the show was over, and the laughing crowd fled out of the tent, the majority of them believing that the best part of the entertainment was reserved for the last. But reach for your bottom nickel, and bet it, that Mr. Smarty won't fool with a cage of monkeys again.

CHAPTER VII.

In a few weeks the circus and menagerie were back to New York, where they were to show for two weeks before starting on their southern tour, which was to last them through the coming winter.

Tim was delighted at getting back to his old haunts again, and, of course, visited Brooklyn, his native place, nearly every day.

But his old friends scarcely knew him, he had grown and altered so much. He was no longer a ragged, dirty boot-black, but took on "tone," and dressed in the height of flashy fashion.

He met a party of his old pals near the Fulton Ferry one day while visiting the scene of his early labors and exploits.

"Halloo, Mike—halloo, Bill! How are you, Duffer?" he asked, going into the group, who were then engaged in pitching pennies.

They all stopped and took a look at him, and one or two of them, not knowing him any better than the others did, asked him if he would have a "shine."

"No. What's the matter with you chaps?"

"Matter? What's der matter wid youse?" demanded one of them.

"Nothing. Don't yer see I've got a shine?" asked Tim, sticking out a fancy patent-leather boot for inspection.

"Waal, what yer givin' us, anyway?"

"Chewing gum."

"I say, Mike, look at der swell."

"Look at der duffer."

"Where'd yer get yer togs?"

"Been ter a fire?"

"Who set 'em up?"

"When did yer get out of hock?" and a dozen such things were given him as the boot-blacks gathered around.

"Boys, don't you know me?"

"Know nodin'!"

"Know yer for a duffer."

"Heavens, what is it?"

"Stick a pin in it."

"Does it move?"

"Does it chaw terbacker?"

"What der yer call it raw?"

"Don't yer know me, boys?" again asked Tim.

"No."

"What is it?"

"Look at der togs."

"Patent shiners."

"Biled shirt."

"Store clothes."

"Fancy shirt."

"Diamond studs," and then they all helped themselves to a laugh.

"Take a good look. Don't you know me?"

"No. Who be yer?"

"Why, one of the old gang."

"No."

"Fact."

"Who?"

"Tumbling Tim!"

"Nonsense."

"Git out!"

"What are you givin' us?"

"Soda water through a quill."

"Fact. On the dead level."

"Well, I'm bowed!"

The others crowded closer to him and indulged in prolonged whistles.

"Don't you know me now?"

"Waal, I'll be hanged!"

"Blowed."

"Busted."

"Sent up."

"Fired out."

"Greased."

"Tumbling Tim!"

"The very cuss," said he, offering his hand.

"Jewhittiker!"

"Moses!"

"Here I am, fellows. Look at me," said he, turning around on one heel and knocking one or two hats off with his cane.

"Tumbling Tim!"

"Don't I look natural?"

"No, I'll be hanged if yer do."

"Wears a cane!"

"An' good clothes."

"Washes his face."

"Oh! it's too much!"

"Went wid der circus, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's bully."

"Got ter be a regular swell."

"Reg'lar showman."

"Yes. Here I am."

"Bang up!"

"Woutsey poutsey."

"No more shine."

"No more piteh pennies."

"No more sleeping in coal boxes."

"No, I'm all right, fellows," he replied, shaking each one by the hand, cordially.

"Good boy!"

"I know'd yer'd fetch it."

"Got it down dead ter rights?"

"Yes, everything is lovely."

"Are yer rich?"

"You bet I am. Get fifteen dollars a week and no expenses," replied Tim.

At this they all gave a whistle, as though the story was hardly to be believed.

"Fifteen dollars a week!"

"An' no hash ter buy?"

"Nary."

"Well, no wonder yer rich."

"I say, blow us off," suggested one of the astonished gang.

"Of course he will."

"Set 'em up big."

"Come right over here and I will give you all you can eat and drink," said Tim, in a lordly way.

You bet they didn't hesitate about accepting that offer, and together they all scampered along towards the nearest eating-saloon, where Tim proceeded to fill them up with anything they might call for; and for the next hour a happier crowd never indulged in good things anywhere, at the end of which time they separated, the bootblacks giving three rousing cheers for Tumbling Tim, the boss of them all.

And this was not the only gang he struck in Brooklyn, for he was well known everywhere, and was now regarded as one of the biggest chaps afloat.

And for dozens of his old companions he procured passes into the circus, which of course made him a still greater man among them, and whenever he made his appearance in the ring, his friends gave him such a cheer as no other performer received, all of which made Tim "solid" with the boss.

Meantime he was changing his character every night, creating even more merriment than the clown did, for by this time he had got the educated mule so trained that he could do anything with him, almost, except to teach him to be honest.

His old habit of stealing still clung to him, and gave Tim heaps of trouble.

Once when the whole business paraded through the streets to create a sensation, Tim rode the mule as usual.

But at the first Dutch grocery store he came upon Mr. Mule stopped short, never to go again, until Tim treated him to the apples and other vegetables displayed in front.

In vain he tried to urge him along; the mule positively refused to go without having some refreshments, and when he got his back up about a thing of that kind, all the whollop in the world would not make him change his mind.

But Tim had no notion of humoring him, and so the other portion of the procession passed on and left Tim and the mule still standing in front of the grocery store.

Finding that Tim was not inclined to treat him, the mule took it into his head to help himself, and in spite of all that Tim could do to prevent him, he walked up to a barrel of apples and began to stow them away under his hide, at which the irate Dutchman rushed out of his store.

"Got in Himmel! Vat you do?" he exclaimed.

"I ara't doing anything," replied Tim.

"But dat shackass do somedings mit my provisions. Dake him away."

"I can't do it; he is too much for me."

"And, by tam, he vos too much for me too. Dake him away; he eat me all up."

"Oh, he won't touch you," replied Tim. "He likes ripe vegetables."

"Donder und blitzen! Gid out mid dot abbles!" he yelled, at the same time giving the mule a savage kick.

Then that mule seemed suddenly to remember that he was in the kicking business, too, and he let go one of his hind legs, knocking over a barrel of potatoes and at the same time landing that mad Dutchman head first into a big tub of eggs, smashing nearly every one of them.

"Murder—murder! Bollice—bollice!" shouted the Dutchman, trying hard to get out of his "soft thing," and a crowd speedily gathered around the place.

To tell the truth, Tim was trying his best to choke off the mule, for he saw that he was surely going to get him into trouble, but that contrary beast seemed to

know that he had struck a good thing and was bound to keep at it as long as possible.

Meantime, the Dutchman was shouting murder in five languages, and the crowd was getting larger and larger all the time.

Finally a policeman showed up.

"What's the trouble here?" he demanded, as he assisted the store-keeper out of his tub of eggs.

"Droubles! Mine Got in Himmel! Do you see dot shackass?"

"Which one?"

"Dot one mit a leg under each corner, dot is eading my abbles all up."

"Get out of this!" said the officer, turning to Tim.

"But I can't choke him off," said Tim.

"Then I'll mighty soon do it for you," replied the officer, banging the mule with his club most savagely. That mule went up behind.

And that policeman allowed his belly to get in the way of that mule's heels, and he went over head first into a barrel of pickles, while a little boy stole his club and ran away with it down the street.

Several citizens pulled the officer out of his briny bath, but he had a pickle in each ear, and his eyes were so full of brine that he was completely demoralized and wasn't worth a cent; his first object being to get to a hydrant where he could wash his eyes out.

The mule by this time appeared to have been satisfied with his free lunch and the amount of mischief he had done, and wheeling about, he started down the avenue as fast as he could go.

Nobody appeared desirous of molesting him, although the boys gave him a rousing cheer and voted him the boss "rabbit" of the whole world.

In the course of five minutes Tim was enabled to rejoin the cavalcade, although he expected to see the whole police force after him.

But that particular police officer appeared to have got enough, and instead of pursuing him after he got the brine washed out of his eyes, he turned upon the Dutchman, and seizing a bologna sausage which he for the moment mistook for his club, he began to whack the poor devil over the head with it for satisfaction.

It might have been satisfaction for him, but the Dutchman wasn't a bit satisfied, for he hallooed murder worse than ever, and as he danced around with the masking eggs dripping from his person, he was one of the most comical sights even seen.

Well, that ended this particular racket, although Tim swore he would never ride the mule again in public, where he was liable to get him into all sorts of trouble; and whenever there was another public parade ordered, he hired a darkey to ride for him.

From New York the show started south, but nothing of any particular importance happened until they got to Annapolis, Md., where they showed two nights.

It was here that one of those strange characters which show people meet with so often was encountered, and he made it decidedly lively for a while.

He was a sort of a cheap Buffalo Bill; a very "bad man," who seemed to be thirsting for gore, scalps and things.

He was loaded down with different kinds of weapons, pistols, knives, tomahaws, and everything of a sanguinary nature.

Going with a murderous swagger to the ticket-taker he attempted to pass in without the usual formality of first securing a ticket.

"Ticket, mister," said the man of the pasteboards.

"What!" roared the bad man, glaring at him.

"Ticket."

"Go drown yerself!" he sneered.

"Not now. Give me your ticket."

"Ticket! I never shows anything but these when I goes inter places like this," said he, patting his revolvers which he wore in his belt.

"No good here, old man."

"No good! Great Sampson! Yer don't know me, I guess?"

"Don't think I have that honor."

"Waal, I'm Bony Jake, the Indian-slayer."

"Well, Jake, you'll have to get a ticket or you can't get in here," said the man.

"Thunder and blazes!" he exclaimed, drawing a pistol with each hand.

"Hold on!"

The crowd at the door started back in affright.

"Is that good?" he asked, pointing one of the pistols at the ticket-taker's head.

"Yes, go in."

"I thort so. Don't try ter fool with Bony Jake, the Indian-slayer, or yer might get hurt. I'm boss, I am. I can get away with any beast yer've got in yer confounded show, an' then chaw up all yer fightin' men. Understand?"

"Oh, certainly. Walk right in," said the ticket-taker, who, understanding this sort of bravo, knew that the easiest way to get rid of him would be the best.

"Bring on yer grizzlies, yer tigers, elephants, lions, camels—anything, I'll show yer what I can do!" said he, swaggging into the tent.

Tim happened to be standing near the ticket-taker at the time, and he began to think how he could have some fun with this old blower.

He followed him into the tent and saw him take a front seat near to the ring, where he began to examine his pistols and to try the edge of his hunting knives upon his thumb nails.

"I say, boss, they've got a camel in this show," said he, getting close to him.

"Bah! killed lots of 'um!" said he, with a blatant sneer.

"And an educated mule."

"Bah!"

"I'm going to ride that mule, and see if I can get the fifty dollars reward."

"Bah!"

"They say nobody can do it."

"Bah!"

"And they say that nobody can ride the camel, either."

"Bah!"

"I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll ride the mule if you'll ride the camel, and we'll show 'em what's what."

"Bah!"

"Will you try it?"

"Ah, I'll ride everything in the bloody old show."

"Der yer know who I am?"

"No."

"I'm Bony Jake, the Indian-slayer!"

get some of the fight shaken out of him at all events; and so, when he had things all arranged, he communicated with Smith, the clown, and posted him about it.

Well, the show began as usual, and the first acts were gone through with all right, when the camel was brought in, ridden by a man dressed as an Arab.

He rode the animal around the ring two or three times, representing life on the great desert of Arabia, after which the ringmaster made the announcement that fifty dollars would be given to any person who would ride the "Ship of the Desert" three times around the ring without falling off, when the "bad man," the Indian-slayer, swaggered into the ring with his belt full of weapons, and announced himself as a candidate for the honors.

never seen a circus before in their lives, and a greener, wilder lot could scarcely be found.

The performance went off with the usual style and hurrah; and when the educated mule was brought out there appeared to be considerable excitement and a first-class prospect for fun.

Smith, the clown, was in good spirits, and every one of his jokes made a hit, a thing which sent him away up in his own estimation; and after Tim had tried and failed to ride that long-eared animal around the ring, Smith made the following amusement.

"If anybody else would like to take a piece of this mule meat, the opportunity is still offered, with extra inducements to congressmen."

This created a big laugh.

"Any member of congress who would like to try his clinging and staying qualities in connection with



The ostrich was making a supper off her hat, and she gave a squall just loud enough to attract attention.

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Tim, starting up and looking at him.

"Fact; killed more'n five thousand Indians in my time."

"Gracious! Well, I never killed many Indians, but I'm rated a great hunter."

The bad man looked at him scornfully.

"I'm known as Ground-Squirrel Ike."

"Ah, seems ter me I've hearn of yer, but I don't care for much now but killin' Indians; them's my game."

"When are you going out again?"

"Afore long."

"I'd like to go along with you."

"All right; I'll take yer."

"But, I say, let's have some fun here to-night. You ride the camel, and I'll ride the mule, and we'll both of us scoop in fifty apiece, and show folks what sort of stuff we're made of," said Tim, confidentially.

"All right, I'll do it. I rather like yer style, young chap. Which comes off first?"

"The camel."

"All right; I'll show 'em what I know 'bout camels, scoop the fifty, and then see what you can do."

"That settles it. Let me press your flesh, for I consider it a great honor," he said, holding out his hand.

"Well, all right, I'll humor you," said the great Indian-slayer, extending his huge hand, and so the whole thing was arranged.

Now this business of attempting to ride the camel around the ring was even worse than riding the mule, for the camel would go like the mischief, and the mule wouldn't; but his "going" was next to being torn all to pieces, for of all the shaking that ever a person received on top of the earth, a camel takes the cake.

Tim knew this, and made up his mind that if he could get the blower to mount him once, he would

"I'm har, I am," said he, squirting about a pint of tobacco juice from his mouth.

His appearance created a decided sensation, for to look at, he was indeed a "bad man."

"Do you wish to ride the camel?" asked the ringmaster, approaching him.

"Yas, I kin ride, lick or kill anything that walks on top of the earth," said he, loudly.

A loud cheer encouraged him, and the camel knelt down for the blower to mount him.

Then he got up and began to trot around the ring with that peculiar, ungainly, and almost unearthly motion, which no other animal under the sun possesses, and another such shaking up that "Indian-slayer" never got before in his life.

He clung to the camel for dear life, while the pistols and knives were shaken out of him at every step.

"Hold on! Stop him! I—I—" yelled the bold, bad man, while the audience fairly screamed with delight.

Once around was enough for him, and more than he could stand, or sit, and presently he was shaken off and tumbled end over end into the sawdust, completely used up and demoralized.

Gathering up his weapons, he struck out amid the groans and derisive shouts of the audience.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM Annapolis, Md., the show went to Washington, D. C., where it had been billed for four nights.

Washington, at certain seasons of the year, is a first-class show town, but when congress is not in session it is one of the worst in the world.

At the time Lent's grand combination of circus and menagerie visited the city congress was in session, and everything was lovely to a degree.

The first night the tent was packed, and among the crowd were several congressmen, some of whom had

our educated mule, will be paid one hundred dollars if he succeeds in riding him once round the ring."

This produced another laugh, which Smith at once took advantage of by proclaiming the same terms for ministers and Sabbath school teachers.

Finally a long-naired southerner, a member of congress from some scarcely heard of back district bounded into the ring, being evidently bound to capture that nundred and distinguish himself at the same time.

"I say, Mr. Clown, I arn't no preacher nor no Sunday school teacher, but I think I kin ride thunder out of that yer mule," said he.

"All right, here is a chance for you to make a bigger mark than any other congressman in Washington."

"And yer'll give a hundred dollars if I ride the mule once around the ring?"

"Our treasurer stands near by with the greenbag in his pocket, waiting with great anxiety to give the to you in case you succeed," said the clown.

"All right," said he, and amid a grand hurrah of applause, the congressman mounted the mule.

He had to mount him again in almost three seconds.

Picking himself up out of the sawdust, he gathered up his battered hat, and while the people were shouting, he looked around in a dazed sort of way, as if to get his own bearings and those of the mule, that stood near by looking as innocent as a pig.

"How does it work, mister?" asked the clown, with a big grin.

"Waal, I seem ter work off," said he, brushing the sawdust out of his hair, "but I ain't done yet."

"And I dare say the mule is not."

"We'll see," he replied, leaping upon the animal's back again.

But that mule knew his business just as well as he ever did.

The congressman, however, meant business, and locking his hind legs under the frisky animal's belly, he grasped him firmly about the neck, and shouted for him to go.

After jumping and prancing around for a moment and finding that his rider was too firmly seated to be shaken off, he resorted to his old game of lying down and rolling over him, to the great amusement of the audience and the discomfort of the ambitious congressman.

But he clung to him like death to a coon, and allowed the mule to roll over him two or three times, mussing him up terribly, and producing a great commotion in the sawdust ring.

Meanwhile there was a perfect rage of shouts and excitement in the audience, and bets were freely offered as to which one of the struggling creatures would win.

But the mule knew his business too well, and after continuing the contest for about five minutes, that congressman drew out, the worst-looking legislator that ever received public applause.

"Bah! that's no mule," said he.

"Indeed; what do you call him then?" asked the clown.

"He's a cross atween a jackass and an alligator."

"That's a strong allegation, sir."

"Waal, I'm the allegator, anyhow."

"Do you think you can ride him?"

"No, confound him, he wants to ride me," said he, whereat there was a loud laugh, during which he slunk back to his seat, the most crestfallen person alive.

"Any other congressman present who would like to contest for the prize?" asked the clown.

But they all appeared to mistrust either their own abilities or the mule's willingness to become a party to the arrangement, and so no other candidate showed up.

So the performance went on until the camel was brought out and the Arab business gone through with.

Then the ringmaster and the clown had a little confab together.

"What sort of a horse do you call that, Mr. Ringmaster?"

"That, sir, is not a horse at all. In Asia they are called ships of the desert, and are greatly venerated."

"Ships of the desert, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do they ever get their deserts?"

"Yes, and they never desert their owners."

"Well, I think that counts against them."

"How does it count against them?"

"Because I should regard it as a good thing for their masters if they did leave them."

"What would the Arab merchant do without the camel?"

"I give it up. Ask the camel."

"The camel is not a talking animal, sir."

"No; but he is a stalking one."

"I regard him as a very amiable beast."

"Yes, but I don't want him to aim towards me. Look at his feet!"

"Look at your own!"

"Well, I carry more toes than he does."

"Then you resemble a tug-boat more than he does."

"How so?"

"Because you carry more tows than he does."

"That is too bad."

"But, punning aside, Mr. Merryman, would you like to ride the camel?"

"Not a cent's worth."

"But we will give you a hundred dollars' worth if you like."

"No, sir, I prefer the mule."

"Very well, we will then extend the offer to any one of the audience who will ride the animal three times around the ring."

"Bully for the audience!"

"Are there any ambitious gentlemen present who would like to carry home a hundred dollars?" asked the ringmaster, appealing to the audience.

This brought out our disappointed southern friend once more.

"I'll try a piece of camel meat this time," said he, again presenting himself in the ring. "Does he lie down?"

"No, sir, he never lies down except to be relieved of burdens."

"Waal, maybe he'll regard me as a burden."

"Oh, no. I will guarantee that he will not lie down with you."

His advent into the ring again produced the wildest kind of a cheer.

"All right. Fetch him along."

"Ship ahoy!" cried the clown. "Heave to and then heave one! Luf up and luf him have a ride! Lay to and lay one—out!"

The camel approached and knelt before the ambitious congressman.

"I never war much on mules, but I guess I ken ride this sort of a hoss."

"Very well, take your seat."

"If I can't ride a big critter like this, I want ter die," said he, taking a seat on the back of the kneeling animal.

"Go it, old ship!" cried the clown.

That camel arose.

That camel began to trot.

That congressman began to cling—to cling for safety to the camel.

Half around the ring he managed to cling, but before he finished one turn he was "spilled" into the sawdust, provoking a laugh which might have been heard a mile away.

Both the clown and ringmaster ran to pick him up.

"Who hit me?" was his first question, as they raised him to his feet.

"The ring hit you," said the clown.

"Where is he?" asked the man, gazing wildly around and pulling a pistol.

"My friend," said the ringmaster, "you have been shaken."

"Who shook me?"

"The camel."

"Where is he?"

"Right here," waiting for you to try him again," said the clown.

"All right. But I thought somebody hit me," said he, in a dazed way.

"No, you evidently lost your grip. Will you try him again?"

"Of course I will. Never seen any kind of a hoss yet I couldn't ride."

Once more did the camel kneel, and once more did that ambitious congressman mount upon his back.

Once more was he started around the ring, and once more did he get shaken from his back, and get kicked and hustled around in the sawdust.

A yell that was deafening greeted this new phase of the performance, and as they again picked him up, he appeared to be in a wilted condition.

"Lemme go home; I arn't well ter-night," said he, limping towards his seat.

The audience yelled.

The congressman was sick. He had got all he wanted. A trifle more, too. He hadn't anything further to say, and during the remainder of the performance he was as quiet as a kitten, notwithstanding those in his immediate vicinity chafed him continually.

The performance gave great satisfaction, and the result was that there was even a greater crowd present on the second night than there was on the first. But don't make any mistake, and bet that that congressman was there, for he wasn't. He didn't get half way there. He concluded that he had got all the practical circus that he wanted, and he didn't go for any more.

On the occasion of the second night's performance, Tim managed to have considerable fun, but, as usual, it was in the menagerie.

It came about in this way.

There was a crowd of people in front of the cages containing the animals, and especially in front of that containing the ostriches.

And among the crowd thus gathered, were several Irishmen, especially two Irish girls, one of whom was accompanied by her beau.

They were full of wonderment at all they saw, and noticeably so respecting the great ostriches.

"That's thim, Jimmy?" asked one of the girls, addressing their escort.

"Pigeons, I guess," said Jimmy, although scarcely knowing what he said.

"Pigeons. The loikes av thim pigeons. Sure ye know better nor that," said she.

"Then they're turkeys."

"Turkeys! Was there iver a turkey the size av that?"

"Well, then, they're swans."

"Swans! Well, maybe they are. But ain't they foine burds?"

"Indade they are. Mony a wan av thim have I seen in the county Tyrone, Ireland."

"Is that so?"

"Troth it is."

Just then the menagerie lecturer came along and somebody asked him about the ostriches.

"Ah! these, ladies and gentlemen, are some remarkable specimens of the largest bird in existence, known as the ostrich. It is a native of both Asia and Africa, and is celebrated the world over for its beautiful plumage and its remarkable speed in running. It can outrun the fleetest Arab steed, but is not regarded as being much of a flyer. In fact, it is oftener caught out on 'the fly' business than in any other way, and when hard pressed by hunters, this huge bird runs its head into the sand of its native deserts and fondly imagines itself hidden from sight, simply because it cannot see its own danger; thereby illustrating in a most powerful manner that well-known saying: 'All flesh is grass—we are here to-morrow but we are gone to-day.' Right this way, ladies and gentlemen, and I will unfold to your astonished gaze the royal Bengal tiger, with nineteen stripes around his—look out there, young man, keep your hands out of that cage, or the anaconda, that terrible worm of South America, will be sure to mistake you for either a monkey or a frog, and the audience will be thinned out by one. Right this way, ladies and gentlemen," he added, in the same breath, leading the way along towards the cage of the tiger.

"I say, Jimmy, phat did he soy?" asked one of the girls.

"He said as how they were ducks."

"He did not, he said as how they were oysters," replied the other girl.

"Sure, ye know better nor that yerself. Ducks ther size av thim!"

"But thim's African ducks."

"Och, sure, I've seen mony an African duck on two legs, but they didn't look a bit loike thim."

"Maybe ye didn't see 'em dressed up."

"Ye're all wrong; thim's ostriches," said one of the girls.

"Phat's thim?"

"Burds, as the milliners kapes to raise feathers an' the price av bonnets."

"Be thim the cratures that lays all the high-priced feathers?"

"So they be."

"I thort hins laid 'em."

"Tut, nonsense!"

"Sure, I'm roight."

"But be them the burds that milliners kape ter lay foine feathers?"

"They be."

Just then one of the ostriches, evidently feeling a trifle hungry, poked its head through the iron bars of its cage and gobbled up the hat worn by one of the young Irish ladies, and at the same moment another of them began feeding upon the shawl worn by the other.

But she, feeling a tug at her garment, and thinking all the while that it was only being pulled by her beau to attract her attention to what the other ostrich was doing to her friend's hat, did not turn around.

"Be aisy, Jimmy. Faith I see the joke," said she, nudging him with her elbow.

"See phat?"

"Ther burd atin' her hat."

"Don't spake a worrud!"

"But be aisy."

"I'm aisy, Ellen."

"No yer not. Lave go av me shawl."

"I haven't yer shawl."

"But yer pullin' at it."

"No, I'm not."

"Don't try ter fool me. Sure, don't I feel it?"

"Feel phat?"

"Yer pullin' me. Lave go, I say, or I'll be mad wid yees."

"But I'm after tellin' ye—"

At that moment the other girl discovered that the ostrich was making a supper off her hat, and she gave a squall just loud enough to attract attention, and to arouse her friend to the knowledge that another bird was making the preliminary moves—probably saying grace—to making a meal of her shawl.

"Howly Mother!" shouted the first.

"Oh—oh—oh!" screamed the other.

"Phat is it?"

"Ther birds. Och, bad manners ter 'em."

"Oh, he has me hat!"

"Lave go me shawl!" and while Jimmy was trying to assist his female friends out of this scrape, another of the birds seized his dicer, and drawing it into the cage began to inspect it, evidently with a desire to know exactly how an Irishman's hat tasted.

The poor bird died the next day.

Such a squealing and excitement as this all kicked up was never heard.

The affair created considerable excitement in the tent, and which of course brought the lecturer to the front.

On learning the cause of the trouble, he said: "Ladies and gentlemen, you have just now witnessed some of the voraciousness of this wonderful bird, the ostrich. But that is scarcely anything compared with what they do upon their native deserts. Why, they have been known to go around where pilgrims were encamped, and eat their tents all up, leaving the inmates asleep upon the sand; even that is not much, my friends. It does not equal what once happened. A friend of mine was once traveling in Arabia. The inhabitants were greatly annoyed by wolves, and so he resolved to make a trap to catch them. The trap was about like the ordinary bear trap, and the first thing he knew he had caught a wolf. He kept on at this business until finally his trap was gone."

"Gone!—gone where?"

"Maybe you won't believe it."

"Go ahead."

"We'll take it all in."

"Whoop her up!" and a dozen different things were yelled at him.

"Well, my friends, an ostrich happened along just after another wolf had been caught, and put into the trap, actually ate it up, after liberating the wolf."

For an instant everybody appeared to be paralyzed, and unable to express their sentiments. But they gradually recovered, and solemnly shaking each other by the hand, they left the show and that truthful story teller, that great lecturer on natural history, behind them.

Some of them were bold enough to say that the showman lied.

Tim didn't think so. He knew the man too well to believe that he would tell a lie.

"Allow me to congratulate you," said he, offering his hand.

"What about, Tim?"

"On that yarn."

"Don't you believe it?"

"Certainly, only I can't see for the life of me why the ostrich should eat up the trap and not take a taste of the wolf."

"Well, they don't like wolf meat, Tim. It is too tough."

"Tough! Wonder if they could get away with that story of yours?"

Both laughed and shook hands, and the show was over for the night.

CHAPTER IX.

At Pittsburgh, Pa., they remained for two performances, but it was here that what seemed at first to be a misfortune overtook them, but which eventually turned out all right, and especially for our friend, Tumbling Tim.

It was at this smoky Pennsylvania city that Smith, the clown, was taken down and completely used up with rheumatism; and as a circus without a clown would be about as bad as the play of "Hamlet" with the character of Hamlet left out, Mr. Lent was greatly bothered what to do.

He consulted with the ringmaster about sending to New York for another clown, but as two or three days must elapse before one could join them, and as they were billed to play the next three nights, something had to be done right away.

"What do you think about Tim?" asked the ringmaster.

"He's too small, I fear," said Mr. Lent.
 "But he has got a heap of funny business right down to dots, I tell you, and hang me if I don't think we can fake him up some togs before night in which he can make a show and get us out of trouble."
 Mr. Lent remained thoughtful for a moment.
 "Where is Tim?" he finally asked.
 "There he is out there by the 'Prop' tent."
 "Call him."
 "Tim, come here!"
 The next moment Tim came bounding up to where they stood.
 "Tim, Smith is sick," said his boss.
 "He allus was the sickest clown I ever saw," replied Tim, for between him and Smith there was little or no friendship, on account of tricks they had played

"He was a poet, my boy. But, come, we have no time to waste."
 "But how about the mule biz?"
 "Oh, we'll have to trust to luck for a fellow to do the riding; but there'll be any quantity of these foundry men here who will attempt to catch that fifty."
 "All right, but I shall have to have three or four private rehearsals with the mule and fill him full of apples so that we shall understand each other to-night."
 And so it was arranged. Both Tim and the ringmaster went to work with a will, and procuring one of Smith's old clown dresses, they got a tailor to cut it down and fit it to Tim.
 While this was being done, they went over their

"But I may go all to pieces."
 "I hope not—for the boss's sake. Do the best you can, and if you make a hit, I will fix it up with Mr. Lent to let you play second clown to me, and teach you the business."
 "Rheumatism and all?" asked Tim, laughing.
 "No, you'll learn that without the help of anybody. Good-bye, my boy. Go to the tent and make up. Do it just as you have seen me do it. You'll find all my paints and things in my big tin box. Be careful of them, and don't try to do too much."
 "All right; I'll do the best I can."
 "I hope you will. And, Tim, if you feel shaky before you go on, you will find a flask of whisky in the same box. Mind, I don't approve of kids like you



Making a rush for them, he caught first one and then the other by their long legs and tumbled them over into the sawdust.

upon each other, and especially because Tim always managed to get more laugh than he did.
 "No—no, he is flat on his back with the rheumatism, and can't perform."
 "Is that so?" asked Tim, thoughtfully.
 "Yes, and do you think you can take his place to-night?"
 "Take his place?" he asked, in great astonishment, while he began to breathe quick.
 "Yes. You have always been anxious to do something big, now here is a chance."
 "But I have got no clown dress."
 "We'll fix you up one if you think you can do the business."
 "All right."
 "Do you think you can?"
 "Yes, sir, I do," said he, resolutely.
 "Good boy! Bill, you see about the dress and fix up the business between you," added Mr. Lent, addressing the ringmaster, and then he left them alone.
 "Now, Tim, you have got the biggest chance you ever had in your life. Do you know what Shakespeare says?"
 "Don't know as I do, for he said so many things," replied Tim.
 "Yes, but he said one thing, my boy, which fits your case exactly, as it has fitted thousands before."
 "In the clown business?"
 "In any business in the world, my boy. Shakespeare says:
 "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
 Which, taken at its flood, leads on to fortune."
 "Shake was a bully boy."
 "A great man—the mightiest intellect that ever lived in the tide of time!"
 "What was he—clown, rider, tumbler or ringmaster?"

ring business in connection with the mule, and before supper time they had everything ready for the show.
 Everybody congratulated Tim on his good luck and enjoined him to do his level best to make a hit, and as a precaution against the possibility of no one in the audience volunteering to ride the mule for the fifty dollars reward, Tim arranged with one of the teamsters to dress up in one of his comical suits and sit where Tim usually sat so as to be ready in case of need.
 But up to this time Tim had been too busy to think much upon the great good fortune which had been thrust upon him, and now, for the first time since it had been proposed to him, he began to feel a trifle nervous and shaky.
 Before the performance, however, he visited Smith, who was abed in his room at the hotel.
 "Well, old man, how is it with you this evening?" he asked, cheerfully.
 "Bad, Tim—devilish bad."
 "Got the jumping jack yet?"
 "Worst I ever had it in the world. Oh, this circus business is the worst in the world for using a fellow up. You are young and all right yet, but it will catch you before you are as old as I am in the business."
 "Well, I hope not, daddy."
 "You'll find out. I tell you it catches the best of them. So many different climates and so much exposure. So they tell me you are going to take my place in the ring to-night?"
 "Yes."
 "Well, my boy, I congratulate you. Do the best you can," said he, with some feeling.
 "What to beat you?"
 "To make a hit; I was ten years in the business before I got a chance to do 'mugging' in the ring, and here you have not got through with your first season. Well, some people were born for luck," he added, with a touch of sadness in his voice.

touching the stuff, anyhow, but just once, if you feel shaky, take a swallow or two just for medicine."
 "Use it for a sort of a bracer."
 "Exactly, but be very careful of it, and don't let any of those other duffers know that it is there, or they will get away with the whole flask without calling it half a smell apiece."
 "All right; I'll remember."
 The next moment Tim was gone, and the crippled clown sank back upon his pillow with a groan and a contortion upon his face that was anything but comical.
 Of course the public knew nothing about all this change, and when Tim rode into the ring that night, although a trifle nervous at first, he was received with laughter and applause, no one of the audience suspecting for a moment that he was not Smith, the advertised clown.
 The ringmaster took particular care of him, knowing well what responsibility rested upon his first efforts, and this did much to reassure him. Of course, he was not a novice in the ring, for he had created many a laugh there before, but then he was only playing "second-fiddle."
 Mr. Lent and his entire company watched him with intense interest, for nearly the whole responsibility of the show rested upon the shoulders of a boy.
 Riding around the ring mounted upon the mule as the tail end of the "Grand Cavalcade," gave him a chance to master his nerves and to get used to the new situation, and he even provoked several laughs by his antics, which greatly encouraged him, and when that part of the performance was over, Mr. Lent shook him warmly by the hand.
 "Good boy," said he. "I guess you'll do."
 "I'll try to, sir."
 "Do it, and I'll give you fifty dollars after the show is over."

At his next entr  e he had a chance to put in some of his tumbling business with good effect, something that Smith could not do on account of being old and stiff. Starting at the door of the exit tent, he began to throw somersaults, and, in fact, went them so fast, that when the audience first got sight of him, he looked like a striped cart-wheel.

Reaching the center of the ring, near where the ringmaster stood, he landed upon his feet with: "Here we are again, boss!" which brought down the house with big applause.

"Well, sir, I should say so! Is that the way you go into society usually?"

"Yes, boss, I always go to parties that way, and the party runs away and I get the grub."

Another laugh for Tim.

"But, Mr. Merryman, supposing you had to escort a young lady?"

"I should hire a man to do it."

"And I guess she would give him a steady job afterwards!"

"Yes. Ah! speaking of steady jobs, boss, here comes a chap who has got one," said Tim, pointing to Melville, the great bareback rider, who rode slowly in just then, mounted upon his fiery steed.

"You are right, Mr. Merryman, that gentleman has a steady job."

At this the daring rider started his horse, and during the next five minutes held the audience spellbound by his wonderful feats of horsemanship, although Tim managed to get in two or three laughs by his funny business about the ring, and thus far he had been wholly original.

"Well, sir, what do you think of that?" asked the ringmaster, after the rider had retired and the applause subsided.

"That was almost as good as I could do it myself, boss."

"You! The idea of your riding a fiery, untamed steed like that!"

"I've got a fiery, untamed steed, boss."

"You have? Well, if you have no objections, I would like to see a specimen of your horsemanship."

"All right. What, ho! Without, there, caitiffs! bring forth my fiery, untamed steed!"

A groom at once came in leading the mule, which of course created a big laugh, during which Tim struck a comical attitude and increased it.

"How's that for a steed, boss?"

"Well, sir, if you cannot approach horsemanship any nearer than your animal approaches a fiery, untamed steed, I am afraid we shall not have much of an exhibition; but we will humor you; proceed."

"Whoa, Emma Maria! Come here. They don't think we amount to much, so we'll just show them some dexterity."

As Tim said this, the mule began to go up and down, first forward and then back, as though anxious for the exhibition.

"Hold on! You can't have this thing all to yourself, for if you do there will be scarcely any horsemanship in the business. Now just kinder settle down to an understanding, you to do the *under* standing while I boss the job. My horse has a great reach, sir," said he, turning to the ringmaster.

As he did so, the mule wheeled around and kicked him (as Tim had taught him to do), sending him sprawling into the sawdust and creating the biggest roar of laughter ever heard in a circus, for Tim managed to turn two or three flip-flaps before he stopped, giving people an idea that he had received a most tremendous kick. The ringmaster ran to pick him up.

"Well, sir, I should say that he did have a great reach," said he. "I shouldn't care to have him reach for me."

"Oh, that was only one of his playful moods. Whoa, Hannah Maria! You shouldn't show off all your good points at once," said he, leaping upon his back.

Again the mule understood his business just as well as Tim did, and he at once commenced to back around the ring in spite of Tim's attempts to make him go forward, and this set the whole house upon a roar.

"All right, I'll accommodate you any way you like. Nothing mean about me," said Tim, wheeling around and facing his tail.

Well, to cut it short, Tim's business with the mule made a tremendous hit. Nothing that Smith had ever done was half so funny or had created so much laughter. Even old circus men who had seen almost everything in the line of funny business laughed heartily over the performance.

And when it came to offering the reward of fifty dollars for any man who would successfully ride the animal once around the ring, a stranger leaped into the arena and attempted to do the feat, only to fall as hundreds of others had done, but of course creating a barrel of fun for the audience, Tim doing his share to keep the laugh going.

This part of the performance over with, Tim's hardest work was done, and when he retired to the exit tent the performers gathered around him to offer their congratulations.

"Tim," said Mr. Lent, grasping him by the hand, "you have earned your fifty dollars, and what is more, you are good for fifty a night as long as Smith is sick."

"Thank you, sir; I am quite glad that I have pleased you," replied Tim.

"You have; and I'll engage you right here at the same salary I am paying Smith, if you will travel with me next year."

"I'm your kitty-did, sir."

"Shake hands on it."

They shook.

But this did not exactly suit some of the company, especially the tumblers, for they were envious of his

great success, they having been in the business for years without ever rising above the dignity of tumblers and vaulters.

As for Smith, when he heard of the great hit that Tim had made, and the fact that he had stepped into his shoes for the next season, he was so wild with rage that he almost forgot his rheumatism for the time.

But the rheumatism did not forget *him* for a week or two.

And it was this same feeling of envy that brought about a racket the third night of Tim's new business.

It was the last night in Pittsburgh, and three or four of the vaulters put up a job that they thought would completely paralyze Tim, and cause him to make a failure, so that he would lose all he had ever made.

The way of the thing was this.

The company of tumblers were under their own manager, and it was understood that they could perform whatever they liked, so long as they received a certain amount of applause. In fact, they comprised a separate company, and could do about as they pleased, although of course under Mr. Lent.

They not only did tumbling, but a lot of grotesque business which was very funny, although they seldom did more than tumbling, because it was too much work to make up.

"Oh, we'll make that runt sick to-night," said one of them.

"You bet we will, the little upstart," said another.

"I was telling Smith to-day about the racket, and he says he will give us a fiver apiece if we will only make him sick," put in another of them.

"But when is Smith going to get out?"

"I don't know. He's very bad yet."

"I heard the boss say that he thought he would be all right in a few days."

"And I heard him say to Bill, the ringmaster, that he didn't care a cuss if he never got around again, so long as he had Tim," said another.

"But we will fix him to-night so that Lent will think differently. It is too cussed bad for that little fakir to take the bread out of the old man's mouth."

"That's so."

"Hang me if I can see what the people find to laugh about at him."

"Nor I. Now, Madame Allaria, our great 'Hurricane Rider' thinks that Tim lays away over Smith, and she told Lent so."

"Well, he has got some clever points."

"But what would he have been if he hadn't learned Smith's business?"

"Nothing."

"Of course not. But we'll sicken him."

And so it was arranged among them to make Tumbling Tim sick, and this was how they went about it:

It was after the mule business was over with, and Tim, as clown, was getting in his fine work wherever he could, creating laughs by the dozen, that four or five of the conspiring tumblers came into the ring, in a style they had never appeared in before while connected with the circus.

They had fixed themselves up on stilts, making themselves about ten feet high, and their trousers were long enough to cover the stilts, and make them look like human "granddaddy long-legs."

Walking straight toward Tim, they got close upon him before he discovered them.

Tim was suddenly taken aback, and being rather nervous any way, he fell upon his knees before the strange monsters, clasping his hands in supplication.

"Oh, Lord! I—I—I—" he stammered, at which the conspirators laughed.

That settled it.

He recognized them by their voices, and although he had never seen anything like it before he was startled only for a moment.

Recovering himself he sprang to his feet.

"Oh—oh!" he cried, "a racket!"

"Your day has come!" howled one of them.

"No, this is my night!" and making a rush for them, he caught first one, and then the other by their long legs, and tumbled them over into the sawdust in about half of no time at all, creating a tremendous burst of applause, for the audience were bound to regard it as a part of the performance.

But the conspirators did not.

There they lay, kicking around in the sawdust, helpless as sticks, and entirely unable to get upon their "legs" again.

The ringmaster ran to their assistance, but it was found to be utterly impossible to get them upon their feet.

"The shanghai's are down!" shouted Tim, and the people laughed because they thought it was a part of the play, and that something else was coming after it.

But it was all to no purpose, however, for the fellows were down and could not get up again.

So, about half a dozen "assistants" were called in, and seizing the stilted giants by the head and shoulders, they dragged them out of the ring and into the exit tent, the most sheepish, crestfallen lot of duffers that ever attempted to be funny at the expense of another.

Mr. Lent soon found out what the racket was, and of course sided with Tim; so the whole thing went against them, and they had the mortification of being laughed at on all sides without hurting Tim in the least.

CHAPTER X.

FROM Pittsburgh, Lent's circus and menagerie continued south, to Baltimore, etc.

Smith, the clown, still remained disabled by rheumatism, and our friend Tim continued to act in his

stead, having his usual amount of fun at nearly every place where they performed.

Finally, at Baltimore, Md., Smith got around again and once more took his place in the ring.

But instead of doing as he had agreed to do with him, he worked in with the ringmaster to have him sent back to do his old business with the trick mule.

During Smith's sickness, however, Tim had earned a big pile of money, and Mr. Lent held to his credit nearly one thousand dollars, which made the young fellow feel mighty fine. There wasn't a better dressed member of the company, and, in fact, he was by this time a regular "masher."

But Tim's success did not please Smith by a long sight, although he had been the means of saving him his position, and it was plain to be seen that he would take every chance he could get to annoy him in his business.

Tim, however, had as many if not more friends in the company than he had, the strongest of which was the educated mule.

Smith knew nothing of the new kind of business that Tim had taught him during the time he was acting the clown, and, when he came into the ring the first night at Baltimore, the animal made more fun with Smith than Smith did with him.

In fact, he was all broken up, and when he attempted to ride him around the ring in his old accustomed way, he got thrown head over heels in the sawdust, creating great laughter and amusement.

Finally he began to talk with him in a coaxing way, thinking that the animal had forgotten him.

"Well!" exclaimed the ringmaster, who was as much amused as any of them, "I must say that you are the healthiest old bareback rider that I ever saw."

"You see, master, the animal has been in bad company of late and has lost his go-ahead-itiveness," replied Smith.

"But he seems not to have lost any of his rolling propensities."

"No, but as a rolling stone gathers no moss, so shall the rolling mule gather no apples nor oats."

"So you prefer to starve him back to good behavior again, eh?"

"Yes; I think he would behave better on an empty stomach."

"Well, I saw him behaving pretty well on an empty one just now."

"How so?"

"When he rolled over on yours just now," replied the ringmaster.

This was another laugh at Smith, a thing which always made him mad.

"Well, sir, I know I have had no supper to-night; but if the mule don't behave any better on his own empty stomach than he did on mine, I think I will sell him to some one to use for breaking up old stoves."

Saying this, and winning a moderate laugh, he again leaped astride of the mule, hoping that he would remember his old business and behave better.

But in this he was mistaken once more, for he had scarcely taken his seat, before he was again rolling in the sawdust of the ring, this time pretty badly used up.

This was too much, and knowing that Tim was responsible for the way the animal cut up, he resolved to get square with him before that part of the performance was over.

"You had better give it up, Mr. Merryman," said the ringmaster.

"Suppose you try him, master."

"No, thank you; I am not taking that sort of exercise just at present."

"It's very healthy."

"I dare say, for an India-rubber man."

"Well, we will give fifty dollars to any person present who will successfully ride the mule once around the ring," said he, addressing the audience.

This produced a buzz of excitement, and after waiting a moment, Tim, dressed as a negro wench, stepped into the ring.

A loud shout of laughter greeted him.

"Ah, there you have an ebony Venus to experiment upon," said the ringmaster.

"Well, perhaps he will succeed, for mules always manifest a great fondness for brunettes."

"Boss, I done go in fo' dat reward," said Tim, approaching the clown.

"Well, perhaps you will go out for it. Have you ever ridden a mule?"

"Oh, heaps ob times, boss. Neber seed one yet dat I couldn't cling to right smart."

"Well, try a little of your right-smartness on this one."

"An' if I ride him once 'round dis yer ring, I get fifty dollars?"

"Certainly."

"Money down?"

"Yes."

"Now—now don' fool a poo' gal."

"Oh, I won't fool you, but I won't be answerable for the mule, for he has been in very bad company lately. Jump on."

"Oh, chile! See me handle him!" exclaimed Tim, leaping astride of the mule, making a great display of black legs and bad shoes, together with an old hoop-skirt that stuck out behind so ludicrously.

The audience fairly yelled as he got his seat and seized the bridle-reins.

"Go 'long dere, chile! No foolin' wid me now."

He had scarcely uttered the words before the mule humped himself and sent Tim flying over his head, making even a more comical show than ever, and creating even a louder laugh.

Slowly picking himself up and shaking the sawdust from his disarranged clothing, Tim again approached

the mule, and as soon as the noise had subsided, he said, addressing him:

"Whoa, dar! What dat yer do, hey? Better look careful or I heave one ob dem gun-boats at yer," said he, showing his big feet.

"Try some more mule?" asked Smith.

"Nebber got too much mule yet, boss," said Tim, again bestriding him.

This time the mule began to dance up and down, and to manifest a desire for more fun.

But Tim knew his business, and whispering a few words to him, there was an immediate understanding between them.

The magic word he spoke was "apples."

The audience was shouting all sorts of advice to the supposed wench, and finally he bent back one of the

"You seem to be under a cloud to-night, Mr. Merryman," said the ringmaster.

"Yes; a cloud of ebony Venus. But didn't I tell you that mules have a fondness for coons?"

"Well, it seems you were right."

"Yes, but I don't propose to give it up so, Mr. Brown. Now I will renew the offer with this condition: that we will give any white man fifty dollars who will ride the mule once around the ring," said he, to the audience.

This produced another buzz of excitement; for as this portion of the performance had created so much fun, the audience felt disposed to see all that could be got out of it, while the clown was anxious to redeem his reputation at the expense of somebody or other.

"Any white man want a piece of this mule meat?"

ances that had ever been witnessed in connection with the educated mule in Lent's circus.

The Dutchman was first thrown into the air by a "buck," landing on his head and nearly driving it into his body out of sight. But, being spunky, he picked himself up out of the sawdust and once more mounted the animal.

The noise was so great that not a word he said could be heard, but by his gestures it was easily understood that he was about as mad as he could be.

This time, however, he resorted to the old trick of locking his legs under the belly of the mule and at the same time placing his arms around his neck.

"Now, py tam, you go on mit your tam foolishness; I guess dot I can stand id as long as you can," they heard him say.



About a dozen cats and dogs engaged in a rough-and-tumble of the most animated nature.

animal's long ears and went through with the pantomime of whispering into it.

"Now, chile, if you 'haves yerself, I gibs you one-half ob de prize," said he, so loud that everybody could hear.

"You unerstan' me, honey?"

The mule flopped his long ears back and forward intelligently.

"Dat am all right, honey. Now go it!"

Breaking at once into a canter, the mule sped around the track, creating laughter and applause among the people, finally completing the circuit amid a most tumultuous hurrah.

Smith was mad enough to fly. He was all jammed out of shape.

Confound that Tumbling Tim, he was bound to beat him at every turn!

"Whar am dat fifty dollars, boss?" he asked, dismounting and approaching the crestfallen clown.

"Go right back there into the tent and Mr. Lent will give it to you," said he, at the same time wishing that he only dared to give it away to the audience all about the racket that had been played upon them.

"Dat am all right if it am all right, boss, but I wants no fooling."

"We never fool, young lady. Go and get your money. You have performed a wonder of muleship."

"Oh, chillun, won't yer foller me?" Tim began to sing, at the same time he went skipping out at the exit tent in true southern darkey style, creating another laugh which nettled Smith greatly.

Clowns are notoriously jealous of anybody who makes an audience laugh, and Smith was the crankiest one in the business in this respect.

Thus far the funny business of the evening had all gone against him, and he felt that if something wasn't done to redeem himself he would not only lose cast with the people, but with Mr. Lent as well.

he asked again, whereat a Dutchman crowded a lot of people aside and made his way into the ring.

Of course he received a round of applause, for they were by this time bound to applaud everybody connected with the amusement.

"Mister funny man, I dinks me dot I rite dot mule horse buddy gwick," said the man, pulling off his coat and hat, and throwing them to one side.

"Go it, Dutchy!" shouted somebody.

"Gobble the fifty!"

"Divvy with the mule same as the coon did."

"You bade I know mine business," he replied, turning to the yelling audience.

"Of course you do!"

"Go it!" was the cry.

"Brung on dot mule-horse!" said he.

"Here you are, Faderland. Jump right on and help yourself," replied Smith, instantly seeing a chance for fun.

"Of I couldn't rite a liddle animal like dot I go hid myself mit a brick-house," said the ambitious Dutchman, looking contemptuously at the little mule.

"Well, I'll bet you five to one that you can't ride him once around the ring."

"I dake dot bed, only I hafe not der money mit me," said he, whereat there was a derisive howl, in which Smith and the ringmaster joined heartily.

"Vat for you leifs? You makes me so met dot I gicks myself ouf der snood und gif me a plue eye ouf my noses. I bade you dot I ride dot mule-horse," said the Dutchman, mad as a hornet over the laugh raised at his expense.

"Very well; hurry up and let us see a specimen of your skill," said Smith.

"Dot was all right; I shows you or I makes myself dead right away," said he, swinging one leg over the mule.

Then followed a series of the most comical perform-

"Whisper in his ear!" shouted somebody.

"Make love to him!"

"Tell him you will divvy with him if he will let you win," cried others.

"I devides me noddings mit him. I rite him or I blay myself oud, I bade you."

"Are you ready?"

"Yaw, go heat!" he yelled.

The mule bucked, but the Dutchman stuck. He ran sideways, endwise, and in every other direction than straight ahead, but yet the rider clung.

Finally he laid down and rolled over the poor devil once or twice, finally freeing himself of his burden.

And that Dutchman, oh! where was he?

He didn't exactly know himself, and when the ringmaster assisted him to his feet, he gazed around in a dazed sort of a way, and then began slowly to feel himself over to see if he was all there.

Of course there was a perfect whirlwind of laughter and applause, during which the victim picked up his coat and hat and made his way sadly out of the ring and back to his seat again, where he afterwards offered to fight at least fifty people, either singly or altogether, because they persisted in laughing and guying him.

But Smith felt comparatively happy, for he had succeeded in producing lots of fun, even if he had failed in coming to time in his own particular business.

From Baltimore they went to Washington, D. C., where they were to play for three nights, and by this time the ill feeling between Tumbling Tim and Smith had grown to be something more than a growl, and had it not been for the vigorous and decided action of Mr. Lent, it might have broken out into an open fight between them.

But by the time they were ready to show in Washington, owing to the change of climate and the rough

usage which the mule had given him (he not being able to do anything with him after Tim's training.) Smith was again laid up with his old arch enemy, the rheumatism, and Tim was once more the "stand by" and clown of the circus.

Of course Mr. Lent and Tim had a perfect understanding regarding the whole business, but owing to the peculiar contract which he had with Smith, he could not give Tim permanently the situation which he had graced so well, although it was all understood and arranged for, for the coming season.

But, as the reader knows, Tim was perfectly solid, and taking Smith's place as clown, he gave even greater satisfaction, ten to one, than he did, and Mr. Lent was not sad when Smith was sick.

And Tim, being always full of fun, and at the same time a good-natured, obliging sort of a fellow, conceived of a quiet little racket that he could play upon Smith, while he was confined to his room, just to get even with him.

So, the second day in Washington he began to work it, and this was how:

Putting an advertisement in the *Post* for his benefit, it read thus:

"WANTED:—A fine Maltese cat. The larger the better. Apply to Room No. 90, Willard's Hotel, this day. Ask for Smith."

And in another place, he inserted this advertisement:

"WANTED:—A fine Scotch terrier, for which the highest price will be paid. Apply to Room No. 90, Willard's Hotel. Ask for Smith."

Not satisfied with this, he inserted another, which read as follows:

"WANTED:—A colored woman to take charge of my wardrobe. Apply to Room No. 90, Willard's Hotel. Ask for Smith."

Even this did not wholly satisfy the young rogue, who was bent on getting square with his persistent enemy, and so he went to at least three undertakers in the city, and representing himself as the business agent for Mr. Lent, he sadly informed them that Smith, the renowned clown, so long connected with Lent's circus, had suddenly passed in his chips, and that their services were required in arranging for the planting of the remains.

The result of all this can easily be understood.

First came the owners of cats. They had Maltese cats of all shapes and sizes, and they banged at Smith's door. They insisted upon seeing Smith; of being the first to present their feline candidates.

Smith was of course paralyzed.

Then came the owners of Scotch terriers, and they came in squadrons. They all went for Room No. 90, of Willard's Hotel, and not one of them forgot to call for "Smith."

Smith began to get wild.

Then came the colored women who had been attracted by his advertisement, and they all wanted to see Smith.

About fifty of them gathered about the door of his room, and when once he opened it, they swarmed into it with their stock for sale.

In vain he protested that he knew nothing about any of them; that he had never advertised for either a cat, a dog, or "coon," and that he didn't want anything or anybody, especially undertakers, just then.

"Boss, I tumble," said one of them, a fellow with a terrier.

"Tumble!" exclaimed Smith, rising up in bed and looking fiercely at him.

"Yes. That's too big a gang."

"I should say so. What do you want?"

"I've got the finest young Scotch terrier here that you ever seen."

"Confound your Scotch terriers!"

"Oh, yes, I tumble. Now, I'll sell yer this dorg for an honest ten, and then you can tell these other duffers that yer suited. See?"

"No, I'll be hanged if I do. Get out of here, everyone of you!" he yelled.

"But I say, boss, look at this for a Maltese Tom," said another of the crowd, approaching with a big cat of that species.

"Go to the devil, all of you!" yelled Smith.

"I say, boss, am yer der man what put a piece in der *Post*, 'bout how yer wanted a cull'ed woman fo' ter take car' ob yer wardrobe?" asked a big wench, striding into the room.

"Go to the devil, all of you!"

"Am dis Mister Smith?" asked another, making her way into the room.

"Shut up! Ring that bell," he cried, pointing to the tassel.

One of the crowd dropped his dog and rushed for the bell rope.

In this respect he made a mistake; for the moment he dropped his dog, there was a cat to attend to him, and then there was a clench and a fight. This was only the commencement of the affair, for about a dozen cats and dogs engaged in a rough-and-tumble of the most animated nature, while the wenches who had come to take care of Smith's wardrobe, and three undertakers, joined in the racket, and for the next five minutes there was the most lively circus ever known.

Smith became wild, and leaping from his bed, he flourished his arms and legs around in the most reckless manner, all the while calling for help and imploring somebody to come to his relief.

Finally the clerks, porters, and proprietors came

upon the scene, and the crowd of dog and cat fanciers was run out after a sturdy contest.

But poor Smith, so nearly paralyzed, was unable to offer any explanation of the affair, only he concluded that it must be a joke put up by some member of the Lent circus troupe, and evidently an enemy of his.

CHAPTER XI.

FROM Washington the company struck further south, to Richmond, Virginia.

Smith, the clown, had recovered from his attack of rheumatism, and once more took possession of the ring, again throwing Tim out to work his funny mule business.

There was no more love between them, however, than there had ever been of late, and although Tim had a great many friends in the company, yet there were several who were envious of his success, and who naturally sided with Smith and were always ready to act upon any of his suggestions that might annoy Tim by way of putting up jobs on him.

Tim, however, had an appetite for that sort of thing himself and especially since he had been traveling with Lent's circus, and had had so many rackets worked at his expense; he had become sharper than ever before, and generally managed to pay off all jokers in their own coin, just as he did the tumblers, as may be remembered.

And he had grown greatly, both in strength and stature, for he was continually at work, trying to perfect himself in his business, being bound to make a first-class performer of himself.

He was now riding nearly every day, learning to do bareback acts, whenever during the daytime the ring was not occupied, assisted and instructed occasionally by Robert Stickney, the great bareback rider.

And now while I think of it I will relate something connected with the circus which does not exactly embrace our friend Tim, although he occasionally mixed himself up in it, and now and then somewhat dangerously.

It may not be generally known to boys that many of these daring female riders in circuses are men, dressed in female costume, but such is the fact.

Well, there was one of these "daring female riders" connected with this circus, although, of course, the thing was not known outside of the company, for had it been it would have failed to draw.

The young fellow was an excellent rider, and when he appeared as "Mlle Louise," and went through his business in the ring, it was sure to create a furore.

Naturally enough, since he "made up" very nicely, had a splendid figure, and looked remarkably handsome, there were hundreds of young men, and old ones, too, for that matter, who fell in love with the supposed daring girl, and now and then the boys had some fun about the matter, although strictly against Mr. Lent's orders.

It was while in Washington that this thing occurred which I am about to relate, but which slipped my memory while writing the preceding chapter, where it properly belonged.

While the company was there, an old fellow, a member of Congress from somewhere, fell head and ears in love with the lovely rider, and tried every means in his power to get an introduction to "her."

But knowing how savage Mr. Lent would be if he should chance to hear of it, none of the company dared to humor the old fellow, and finally he approached Tim, seeing that he was the youngest member of the company, and offered him ten dollars if he would arrange it somehow so that he might get acquainted with the lovely and daring bareback rider.

Tim thought he saw some fun in the business, and concluded to scoop that "tenner."

"I say, boss, Mr. Lent watches her like a cat would a mouse, for fear somebody will run away with her," said he, looking cautiously around.

"Is that so, sonny?" asked the honorable old duffer.

"Yes."

"Rather a nice girl, isn't she?"

"Bully!"

"Does she like men pretty well?"

"Bet she does; but she can't get much of a chance, 'cos they watch her so. The old man thinks he has got her down pretty fine now, though."

"How is that?"

"Well, I don't like to tell."

"But do you think you can work it so that I can get a chance to speak with her?"

"Of course I can, but—"

"But what?"

"I'd get bounced if the old man found it out, that's all."

"Oh, he'd never know about it. Now here is ten dollars; tell me all about her, and do all you can to get me a chance to speak with her."

Tim took the money with some well acted reluctance.

"What did you mean when you said that the manager had gotten her down pretty fine?"

"You'll never give me away, boss?"

"Never, I give you my word."

"Well, I'll trust you, if you are a member of Congress," said Tim, whereat the old fellow opened his eyes at him.

They were in the bar-room of Willard's Hotel, where Tim had been pointed out to the old masher as belonging to the circus troop, and he had accosted him.

"Well, go ahead; what is it?"

"I say, boss, the old man is so awfully afraid and jealous of her that he makes her dress in men's clothes so that folks won't know her. Fact," said he, earnestly.

"You don't tell me so! What an outrage! What does she say?"

"Oh, she don't care."

"But where can I see her?"

"I'll tell you the best time; that is, just after the show breaks up. She comes out dressed like a young fellow, and goes to her hotel. You can just walk right up and speak to her, and she won't kick."

"Do you think so?"

"Certainly. She'd only be too glad to think somebody saw through the racket."

"Good. How does she dress?"

Tim gave him a good description of how the young fellow dressed, and told him just where to stand to see her when she left the dressing tent.

The old duffer was delighted, and said he would be there, after which he turned away and left Tim to have his big grin all out by himself.

"Now, if he hasn't got a pudding, no duffer ever had, so I'll go and bust this 'tenner' up into cigars and things," he added, walking away.

At the appointed time the old lover was waiting for his charmer, and Tim was waiting out of sight for his fun.

Presently "Charley," for that was the name he was known by, emerged from the dressing tent, and started for a walk to his hotel.

Old Adonis followed close behind, and after they had gone a few rods away from the tent, he approached him.

"Good evening, Mademoiselle Louise," said he, in tones meant to be captivating.

Charley stopped and took a look at him. "It was the first time his professional name had ever been applied to him by a stranger, and he was slightly startled, although, being a bold, muscular fellow, he wasn't greatly frightened.

"Well, what's the matter with you?" he finally asked.

"Oh, that's all right, my dear girl. I have penetrated your disguise and have come to escort you home."

"You have?"

"Yes; will you take my arm?"

"I'll take your bloody old scalp if you don't get out of this," said Charley, firmly.

"Oh, no, don't be offended, my dear, I am—"

Before he had time to give himself away any further, he was sprawling in the mud, from a well directed blow by Charley, which took him plump on the nose, after doing which he walked away.

But that Congressman!

Slowly picking himself up, he was employed during the next few minutes in attending to that badly damaged bugle of his, trying to stop the flow of the ruby.

But he didn't attempt to follow his charmer again, you may bet on that. He had got all he wanted, in fact, a trifle more, and selecting as roundabout way as possible, he sneaked back to his hotel, a man too sick to see company.

That was the last night of the show in Washington, and before morning the next day they had folded their tents like the Arabs, and silently stolen away.

But the old member of Congress did not forget his lesson right away, and although he knew that a bad joke had been played upon him by Tim, he probably never suspected the real truth, and so Tim had the enjoyment of it all to himself, and the ten dollars besides, never having given it away until he told the author for the purpose of having our readers enjoy the racket.

Well, now we will return to Richmond.

At the close of the first night's performance there, during which he had made it as rough for Tim as he could, Smith went off and got as drunk as a goat.

It was about two o'clock in the morning when he returned to his hotel, and after tumbling up two flights of stairs he finally managed to find his room, and to get into bed, leaving the door wide open.

Tim, as well as several other guests of the house, had been awakened, and he and Charley concluded to take a look at him, to see if everything was all right, seeing that his door was open.

The gas was burning brightly, and Smith lay nearly naked upon the outside of his bed, fast asleep.

Partially covering him up, they withdrew, closing, but, of course, not locking the door behind them.

Tim told Charley of a racket that he thought he could play upon the clown, and after listening to it, Charley concluded that it would be a big thing, provided it could be worked.

"Leave that to me," said Tim. "You just wait and keep your hearers open."

"All right, go ahead," said Charley.

"I owe him one, anyway, for that last racket he played on me."

"And I have never got even with him for that dirty job he put up on me," said Charley, who bore him no love.

"You just wait."

Going down to the kitchen, he found one of the porters who had been to the circus that evening.

"Want to earn a couple of dollars and a ticket for the show?" he asked.

"Faith, I do," replied the porter.

"Well, you know Smith, the clown?"

"I do, an' a funnier man niver brathed than he is."

"Well, he's funnier than ever just now."

"How's that?"

"He's drunk."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, drunk clear through."

"Where is he?"

"Up in his room. Now, I'll tell you what I want. When he gets on one of his sprees, there is only one thing that will cure him, and if he don't get it, he'll keep on it a month."

"Yer don't say so?"

"Fact. He must have a mustard poultice put on

his stomach while he is asleep or he will continue his spree to-morrow, and there will be no show. Mr. Lent don't know that he is on it or he would be as mad as blazes, and rather than have him lose his situation I will give you a pair of dollars to make a big, strong mustard plaster and put it on him."

"I will," said the porter, resolutely, "for it's a sin and a shame ter have him make such a baste of himself."

"But you must be careful and not wake him up, for he knows that the plaster will cure him, and as he loves whisky better than anything in the world, he will kick like a mule rather than have it on. Mind you, now, I wouldn't have him know for the world that I had anything to do with it, for he would kick the stuffing out of me, and if he should by any means chance

same floor, nor did they have to listen long before they understood that the plaster was working.

Scarcely two minutes elapsed before Smith began to feel an uncomfortable warmth amidships, but being still under the influence of liquor, he could scarcely comprehend what it meant, unless it was the "searching" effects of the whisky.

So he rolled over and shouted fire, but in doing so he worked the plaster around over his back, where it again took a grip upon him.

In a few moments he shouted fire again, and this time partially arousing, he caught a glimpse of the plaster.

Fully believing that he had the jimjams or something else, he leaped from his bed, but the plaster

and were anxiously inquiring whether it was on fire or not.

"What the devil is the matter with you?" demanded the night clerk.

"I—I don't—don't know," replied poor Smith, gazing wildly around, and at the same time trying to make an ulster out of his undershirt, the only article of wearing apparel he had on.

"What were you yelling about?"

"I—I thought there was a fire."

"And don't you see there is none?"

Smith looked even wilder than ever, and felt tenderly of his stomach.

"You have got 'em, old man."

"Guess I have," he mused, sadly.



Thinking that water would do him no harm, they threw four or five pailfuls over him, drenching him most thoroughly, and really easing his pain.

to find out that you did it, tell him that Mr. Lent ordered it. See?"

"I do. Is he asleep?"

"Yes, sound asleep."

"Faix, a drunken sleep is not aisily disturbed; I'll fix him; I'm a friend of temperance onyhow."

"Well, give him a good one, and it will break him from drinking for a month."

"All roight, me b'y."

Thus arranged, Tim returned to his room, where Charley and Mr. Stickney were engaged in a quiet game of euchre, and told them what he had done.

Meanwhile Pat, the porter, had gone to work getting up his mustard plaster, and when finished it was nearly large enough for a horse-blanket.

Placing it upon a large server, he started for Smith's room.

There lay the boozy clown, snoring so loud that no could sleep within three rooms of him.

"Ah, be gob," mused Pat, "I've something here that'll warm yer bowels better nor whisky will so it will. Faix, but it's ther quarest thing I iver hearn tell, ofter sober a man up; but I suppose ivery man has his own weaknesses an' his own peculiar cures, an' they know phat his is. Ah, but he's a funny man, onyhow; but I wonder phat he'll say when he wakes up and finds out that his spree is all broken up while he's asleep? Shure, but it's mad as blazes I think he'll be, an' I'd better be aisy an' quick, an' get out of this as quick as iver I slap it on him, for if he wakes up he'll be loike a toiger."

With this he sat the server down, and proceeded cautiously to turn down the clothes which Tim and Charley had thrown over the clown, and then taking up the big plaster, he placed it over his stomach.

Then snatching up his server he darted out of the room and returned to his duties again.

Tim and the others were listening near by on the

clung to him like a poor relation, burning him like the mischief.

"Oh—oh! What is it?" he yelled. "Murder—fire—help—police!" and gradually waking to his torment, though still in ignorance as to what it was, he rushed out into the hall, shouting all sorts of exciting things.

"Murder—thieves! Bring a bucket of water!" he cried, rushing down-stairs like a madman.

By this time everybody in the hotel was aroused, and such an excitement, short of a real fire, was never known.

The night clerk and three or four porters armed with buckets of water, all hands believing that there was a fire, met him as he reached the office.

"What is it?"

"Where is it?"

"Fire!"

"Where?"

"Here!" said he, indicating his mustard-covered person.

But he had lost the plaster during his wild flight, and, thinking it was only a case of jimjams, and that water would do him no harm, they threw four or five bucketsful over him, drenching him most thoroughly, washing the mustard from his body and really easing his pain.

But the fright he was in wasn't eased a bit; on the contrary he was more frightened than ever, and at least fifty frightened guests gathered around him as he stood there in almost complete nudity, wondering what the deuce it all meant anyhow.

Tim picked up the plaster which he had dropped on the stairs and threw it out of the window, and this, together with the drenching and rinsing off which he had received in the office, effectually removed every evidence of the cause of the trouble.

Everybody in the hotel was by this time fully aroused

"Now go back to bed, and hereafter drink less whisky."

"Oh, Lord!" he groaned, and fully recovering himself, he started hurriedly up-stairs towards his room, the porters having by this time quieted the fears of the guests by assuring them that there was no cause for alarm; that it was only a case of "snakes in the boots."

Tim, Charley, and Stickney met him as he reached the floor on which his room was located.

"What the devil is the matter with you, Smith?" asked Stickney, after they had followed him to his room.

"Oh, Bob, I—I'm afraid I've got 'em," he groaned, throwing himself upon his bed and getting under cover.

"Well, I should say you had. What was it, anyhow?"

"Oh, a dreadful burning sensation. I am afraid that this southern rye is too beavy a crop for me," he moaned.

"Guess it is, old man. Better swear off," said Stickney, looking serious.

"Yes, I will. I won't drink another drop of the cussed stuff. Oh, how I burn around my stomach and back."

"Bad rum, Smitty."

"Dreadful stuff. Worse than it used to be. But I'm done, Bob."

"I hope so. Will you swear it before us three?"

"Yes, I'll swear it."

"Good! We are all witnesses."

"Yes," said both Tim and Charley.

And in this frame of mind they left him to sleep, if he could. But it had a good effect upon him, for during the remainder of the season he did not get drunk again.

CHAPTER XII.

FROM Richmond the circus company went to Norfolk.

It took Smith fully a week to get over the burns he received from that mustard plaster at Richmond, but neither of the parties engaged in the practical joke gave it away, and probably he never knew, or at least he never did until he read the preceding chapter—providing he did so, that it was a mustard plaster and not the bad whisky he drank on that occasion which caused his fiery sensations.

But it cured him. If that was the way southern whisky served him, he wanted no more of it, and he swore off honestly, and so Tim regarded himself as a temperance reformer.

It was lucky for him, however, that Smith did not find out the joke that had been played upon him, for he was a furious man when his back was up, and he would have broken every bone in Tim's skin and fed him to the lions and tigers had he found it out.

But quite a number of the company did find it out on the sly, and for months afterwards the laugh was clearly on him.

They were advertised to show two nights in Norfolk, and about one-half of the audiences was made up of negroes.

In fact, they came from miles around to witness the show, and such conveyances as they came in, and such a crowd of curiosities as they were can never be seen in any but a southern city.

They were mule riders for the most part, of course, for there are ten mules to one horse in the south, but the way in which they came was what took the circus company.

Tim, however, was the most interested one of them, for he was about the only one of the company who had never traveled with a circus company before, or who had never visited a southern city.

They began to arrive an hour or two before the doors were open, and to anchor their teams in the vicinity, so Tim loafed around near the ticket wagon to take all in and enjoy it.

Along came one old "coon" with a mule hitched to a two-wheeled something. He probably called it a cart or a wagon, but the general reader would be greatly puzzled to make out what it was.

The two wheels of the affair were made of planks, placed crosswise, and afterwards made something like round, although one of them was at least a third larger than the other, while the body of the vehicle, made up into something resembling a box, was composed of rough boards. As for thills, they were simply poles without even the aristocratic show of the bark being taken off.

Then came another curiosity, in the shape of the harness. This for the most part was composed of ropes, made from twisted hemp, although the collar was made of twisted rye straw.

Altogether it was one of the most unique and primitive affairs ever seen upon a beast of burden. There were no seats in this "coach," but in the bottom of it there was some straw upon which the old coon, his wife and three children sat, as they rode from about fifteen miles away to visit the circus.

Nor was this by any means one of the most peculiar of them all. They came in all sorts of curiously constructed vehicles, and hundreds came on the backs of mules, sometimes as many as four upon one of the patient animals.

One old fellow of the brunette order attracted Tim's attention. He had ridden at least five miles upon a mule, a large, powerful fellow, by the way, and behind him rode his wife, also astride, and another dusky belle, probably his sister, who also took the same method of riding.

He was exceedingly anxious for fear the show would commence before he might reach town, although he was at least an hour ahead of time.

"Whar am dat suckus, boss?" asked the husband, as he pulled up his mule in front of the ticket wagon.

"Right here," replied Tim, to whom he had spoken.

"Am she begun ter show yet?"

"No, you have plenty of time."

"By golly, dat am good. Why, boss, we funk dat we war late. Git down out ob dat, ladies, an' let me go anchor dis yere animal somewhar."

The "ladies" began to obey orders, but in doing so they got their legs and hoopskirts so badly mixed up that they tumbled off in the most ludicrous manner, creating a wild hurrah among the other "coons" who had already assembled.

"Bettah mind you' own business," said the eldest female, struggling to her feet, and turning to the crowd.

This caused a roar of derision.

"Am somebody foolin' wid yer, Pauline?" asked her husband, wheeling around.

"Yes; some ob dese smart coons think dey saw something funny, I s'pose," said she.

"Pauline, let out your muscle. I am wid yer jus' as quick as I can fine a place ter hitch dis yer mule," said he, and away he rode, leaving the tender females to fight their own battles.

This they appeared perfectly able to do, for after a little scrimmage with two or three of the young bucks who had been guying them, they were left alone, and those who laughed or geyed did so at a safe distance, while Tim took it all in and enjoyed it.

"Who gwine fo' ter ride dat muel?" asked some one in the crowd.

"Oh, you neber mind 'bout dat. We hab got a job for dat animile. We know all 'bout dat kind ob four-legged trash, we does, an' don't you fo'get it, honey!" said a big, strapping, black fellow.

"Dar am gwine fo' ter be some fun in dis yer show, ehle," said another, standing near.

Tim heard all this, and made up his mind that there

was going to be fun, although from what he knew of the educated mule, and the difference between him and the general run of animals of his style, he felt sure that the fun would be all on one side, just as it had always been. They might know all about mules, but what they didn't know about "educated mules" would probably be the ruin of some of them.

But they were a jolly set, and as they gathered around the ticket wagon, waiting for their twenty-five cent pasteboards, they indulged in all sorts of chaffing and boasting regarding what they were going to do, and now and then they would burst out into the melody of plantation song, which was a treat to unaccustomed ears.

Finally the doors were opened, and then commenced a wild rush for tickets, and the seats nearest the ring. The white people were completely crowded back, and it was not until the darkeys had obtained seats that they could get a chance at the ticket wagon. But this did not bother them much, as they wished to sit behind the negroes, and wholly by themselves.

And such a noisy, wrangling lot of people as they were! You could scarcely hear yourself talk, such a clatter did they keep up while getting settled. It was a Fourth of July, Christmas, and New Year's rolled into one for them, and they yelled at each other from different parts of the amphitheater, calling each other by name, but for the most part seemingly anxious only that all who knew them or might thereafter know them, should know that they were there.

"I say, Jambo, gwine fo' ter ride dat mule fo' der fifty dollars?" one of them would call, in a loud tone.

"Honey, yer bet dat I'm heah. Do yer listen to me, ehle?" would be replied.

"You can't ride no mule. You can't ride a saw-buck."

And then there would be a laugh.

"Don't you worry 'bout me, sonny. I'm heah."

"But whar will yer be when yer gets on dat redicatted mule? Yah—yah—yah!"

"Bet yer five dollars dat yer can't ride one side ob him!"

"Five dollars! Why, coon, yer habn't got five cents 'bout yer clothes!"

"Better go through me an' see, honey."

"Bettah pay fo' dat watermillion dat yer stole from Massa Smart's garden las' fall."

"Better bring back dem chickens dat yer borrowed from Mr. Blume's las' winter."

"Oh, you am no good, anyhow. Why, chickens run an' hide when dey smell yer coming. Go 'way!"

And so the chaffing went on until the tent was full of people, and it was time for the show to commence.

Tim had been greatly amused while listening to it, but he came to the conclusion that there would be no necessity of his taking any part in the mule racket, and he told the ringmaster so, although it was thought best that he should be near at hand in case he was needed.

Smith, the clown, was feeling first-rate that evening, and as usual came out mounted upon the mule, riding behind the vast concourse in the great cavalcade, embracing all the talent in the show, and which constituted the opening business of the evening.

The noisy darkeys were now either awed into silence by the splendor of the presentment, or they were only heard in exclamations of astonishment and delight as the show progressed, although it was easy to be seen that more than half of their interest was concentrated in the educated mule, of which they had heard so much.

After the pageant of the grand entry the show began in regular order. Smith never had a more responsive audience, or one that laughed louder at every one of his jokes, and of course he was happy, only hoping that Tim would not be called upon so as not to capture any of its laughs.

The show gave great satisfaction, as it always did, although it was plain to be seen that the negroes were anxious to see that part of it wherein the educated mule figured. If there was ever a mule born that a Southern darkey could not ride, they wanted to be introduced to him right away.

Well, finally the old business between the ringmaster and the clown commenced. Of course, it is pretty well known to the readers by this time, but it was all brand new to both whites and blacks of the audience.

And they roared and opened their big mouths over the fun until it did seem that more than one-half of the black heads would fall over back upon the seats behind them.

Finally, after the clown had succeeded in riding the mule around the track several times, then came the offer of fifty dollars to any one who would successfully do the same thing. In fact, ride him around in almost any style.

The ambitious coons looked at each other, but no one appeared willing to take the lead, although it was clearly to be seen that several of them intended to try for the prize.

And on account of this backwardness, and for the purpose of setting the ball in motion, Tim walked into the ring and announced himself as a candidate.

He was dressed like a white Southern countryman—"poor white trash"—and he proceeded to go through with the business with all the flourishes, get-thrown, bounced, rolled upon, and finally vanquished, to the great delight of the darkeys.

Then a young buck coon sauntered into the ring to try that mule. There wasn't the slightest objection to his doing so, and the clown assisted him to mount.

But he didn't have to assist him in dismounting, for that mule suddenly got his back up, and that ambitious darkey went upwards, and then came down.

He made a hole in the sawdust ring with his head, and the people almost made a hole in the tent with their yells.

One trial was enough. Getting together what he could of himself, that darkey limped back to his seat, but without any further interest in the performance. In fact, he wanted to go home.

Then another little darkey shambled out into the ring.

"Gib me fifty dollar if I go 'round de ring once on dat yer mule?" he asked, addressing the clown.

"Yes, my little colored brother, we will give you fifty dollars if you will go once around the ring on this mule," said Smith, gleefully.

"All right, I take dat fifty. I say, boys, come heah an' see me go 'round once on dis yer mule," he called back to the group of colored people from where he had come.

In response to this call, four big strapping negroes entered the ring, two of them having handspikes about six feet in length.

"What are you going to do?" asked Smith.

"See fair play, boss," said one of them.

"Oh, that's all right. I didn't know but that you were going to hurt the mule," replied Smith, although still undecided about what such an appearance meant.

"No, we will not harm de mule, boss; we only wants ter see de little coon hab fair play. Climb, Andy."

Andy, for such the little darkey's name appeared to be, jumped nimbly upon the mule and yelled for him to go, which he of course had no notion of doing, that is, to any great extent.

The first thing he did was to kick and try to "buck" the little coon, but as he did so the four big darkeys approached with their handspikes.

Placing one of them just forward of his hind legs and another just behind his front legs, one at either end of the rails, they lifted the mule from his feet.

A tremendous roar greeted this unexpected performance.

Having him once balanced upon the poles, they proceeded to carry the mule around the track in spite of himself, although he kicked with his hind legs and pawed with his fore ones as they carried him along.

But there was no escape, and while the yell went up, they succeeded in carrying the animal triumphantly around the ring with the little darkey seated upon him.

Clown, ringmaster, and proprietor were paralyzed at the audacity of the trick to capture the reward, and even Tim stood aghast at the performance. It was a racket that he never would have thought of, and he was surprised at its ingenuity.

The applause was deafening, but after making the circuit the four big darkeys retired and the little rider held out his hand for the reward.

"What do you want?" asked Smith.

"Dat fifty, boss."

"But you didn't ride the mule once around the ring?"

"Yes, I did, boss."

"No, both you and the mule were carried around."

"Dat am nuffin ter do wid it, boss. You say if I go 'round de track once on dat mule dat I get fifty dollars."

"True, but you were to have ridden him."

"Didn't I ride him, boss?"

"But—"

"Oh, come down!"

"Pay der boy!"

"Dat war fair."

"Pay up!"

"Pay down!"

"Dat fifty, boss!"

"Oh, pay him!"

"Pay him or we'll clean out de show!"

"Wake up, dar!"

"Time, dar, boss!" and hundreds of other comical or menacing calls came from every side.

Mr. Lent was near at hand, and knowing that he had got to show one more night in the city, and believing that it would be a good advertisement if he paid it, and worse than none at all if he refused, he called the ringmaster to him and handed out the fifty.

He, in turn, called upon the boy to approach, and in the presence of that vast crowd he counted out the bills into his black hand, while the audience applauded the act to the echo.

But it took the wind all out of Smith's sails, and in the face of all that had taken place, he did not hesitate to say that the whole thing was a job put up by Tumbling Tim, although no one else but he dreamed for a moment that such a thing could be possible. At all events, it was pronounced a first-class racket on the circus management.

But as it turned out, that fifty dollars did more by way of advertising the show than five hundred could have done in any other way.

Well, after the performance in the ring, the crowd surged into the menagerie for the purpose of seeing the animals and other curiosities of this department, and this part of the business the whole company enjoyed quite as much as the audience with its white and black mixture did.

The jolly "lecturer" never was in finer spirits in his life, and the way he did rattle off the big words in connection with the animal rarities and curiosities was a caution, and nine out of ten of them were completely broken up by his flow of gab.

"Right this way, ladies, gentlemen, and coons, and feast your astonished gaze upon the wonders of our mundane sphere. Here you behold the 'appy family; all sorts and sizes caged together, and yet they live in the most Christian-like 'armony. And 'ere you behold the tempestuous lion h'of h'Africa, the king h'of beasts and the monarch h'of the jungles. He has partaken h'of 'is usual h'amount h'of human gore and quivering flesh to-day, and 'e is in a state

of quietude. In the next cage you behold the royal Bengal tiger, who also never becomes satiated save with human gore and quivering flesh. We buy fifty negroes per day to satisfy their terrible h'ap-petites."

At this announcement there was a wild cry among the darkeys, the majority of whom made a break for the door, not knowing but that they might be worked in for fodder and free lunch for these terrible wild animals.

By this time, however, the show was nearly over, and everybody departed with a head full of wonder and belly full of satisfaction.

Then came the rush and hurrah of everybody trying to find their mules and their conveyances for home.

In this there was more fun than there was in their

where the company was quartered, and great excitement was manifested.

Several of the gang managed to have considerable fun which they picked up around the bar-room, but it remained for Tim to work the biggest racket.

He did not work it on a citizen or stranger, however, but upon his old enemy, Smith, the clown. Smith was all the while jealous of Tim, and never did he allow a chance to escape him to work some racket or other on the lad.

And this was the way the lad worked it on Smith.

Going to the landlord of the hotel, he took him aside with a very mysterious air, and said to him:

"You don't wish to hurt the reputation of your hotel, do you?"

"Oh, dreadful! Liable to smash everything in your hotel, and frighten everybody out."

"That settles it. He can't stay."

"Of course I wouldn't say a word if he hadn't a good place to sleep in at the tent," said Tim, taking the landlord by the arm.

"It is really good in you."

"Oh, don't mention it. But I don't like to see our agent play his practical jokes on unsuspecting landlords. I think it is real mean, and out of friendship for you I give you the tip. See?"

"You are very good. I will go over and have a talk with him."

"That's right."

"Not dangerous, is ne?"

"Oh, no; only he gets mad as blazes if anybody



Having him once balanced on the poles, the four darkeys proceeded to carry the mule around the ring in spite of himself, although he kicked with his hind legs and pawed with his fore ones as they carried him along.

coming together, for there were dozens of fights, dozens of mistakes on account of one party's getting the conveyance belonging to another, and, all in all, it was worth more than the show which they had come to see.

In fact, it was fully an hour after the show closed before the last man went away anything like satisfied, and even then the mules were mixed quite as much as were the owners and riders thereof.

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER showing in several places with very good success, the circus and menagerie finally anchored at Beaufort, South Carolina, for three days.

Beaufort is a first-class show town, especially for a circus, for citizens, white and black, come from miles away to see the show. In fact, whenever a circus strikes the town there is a general holiday; everybody comes to town to take a piece of it and to have a jolly good time.

Tumbling Tim by this time had come to understand that there was more fun to be had in the south than in the north, and although it was dead of winter where they had come from, it was now bright, pleasant, spring-like weather, with everything as lovely as it would have been in New York State in the middle or last of May.

On arriving at Beaufort they found that the regular announcements of the circus had created a wild excitement among the inhabitants, and everybody in any way connected with the show was regarded as something more than common, and watched with peculiar interest wherever he went.

Tim tumbled to this racket at the very start, and concluded to have some fun on the strength of it.

There was quite a crowd of people around the hotel

"Why, of course not. What do you mean?" asked the landlord, with some curiosity.

"Do you see that man over there?" he asked, pointing to Smith, who stood by a window reading a paper.

"Yes. What about him?"

"Fits!"

"Fits?"

"Yes."

"You don't so?"

"Fact."

"Bad?"

"Worst you ever saw."

"But he belongs to the company?"

"Yes, but we generally make him sleep in the tent, for when he gets them on him, as he does almost every night, he raises the very devil."

"Good gracious!"

"Fact."

"And I have got such a sensitive lot of guests here just now. What shall I do?"

"I'll tell you how it happened. The advance agent is a practical joker, and whenever he can have a little fun, he is bound to do it. Now he has worked poor Smith off on several hotel proprietors, and he played the very devil with them."

"You don't tell me so!"

"Fact. But don't blame poor Smith. He isn't to blame for it. He can't help it. It was born with him, poor man! But, you understand why I warn you against him?"

"Oh, certainly."

"Simple friendship for you."

"I understand it. Thanks."

"Don't say a word."

"Of course not."

"That is, as coming from me."

"Never. But you say he has 'em real bad?"

especially a stranger, insinuates that he has fits. But just tell him that you understand the racket, and that he must sleep in the tent."

"He won't kick?"

"Oh, yes he will, as I told you before, but all you want to do with him is to be firm."

"Brace up, as it were."

"Exactly."

"I'll speak to him," saying which he walked over to where Smith was engaged in reading his paper, while Tim got out of sight, where he could see the racket.

"Mr. Smith?" he asked, touching him on the arm.

"Yes."

"I am the landlord here."

"Ah! glad to know you. I'll take a little rye," said Smith, folding up his paper.

The coolness of the clown rather took the landlord aback, and not knowing what else to do just then, he walked toward the bar-room, followed by Smith, who was always ready to take a drink. In fact, he was never known to refuse.

The landlord ordered the barkeeper to "set 'em up," and they drank together.

"Mr. Smith," said he, after drinking, "I am sorry, but—"

"Oh, this is good enough for me; I am not proud. In fact, I had rather drink rye whisky than champagne," said Smith.

"Ah, but that was not what I was about to say," said the landlord, hardly knowing what to say or where to commence.

"Oh, don't mention it. I will take a cigar, please."

"Certainly; some of those 'Reinas,' Timothy," said the landlord.

"Ah! Reina Victoria! Finest weed in the world, landlord; I always smoke them," said Smith, gobbling two.

The landlord was almost paralyzed at the stupendous cheek and coolness of the clown. He looked at Smith in perfect wonder, as he saw him pocket one Reina and light the other with the utmost sangfroid.

"But, Mr. Smith, I—" "That's all right. Nice day, isn't it?" "Yes, very fine day." "Going to the show to-night?" "Well, yes, I think I shall."

"Fine show! In fact, one of the best I was ever connected with in my life, and I have been connected with many. I will guarantee that you never saw a better."

"I dare say." "You must see my business with the educated mule. Finest in the land."

"So I have heard." "Great animal that." "So I am told, but—" "Don't miss seeing the show," said Smith, turning away.

"But, Mr. Smith!" "Got tickets, of course." "Yes; but—" "That's all right; you'll see me," and again he turned away.

"Mr. Smith!" called the landlord. "Sir?" "One word with you."

"Certainly, only I have not yet finished reading my morning paper. I will take another drink with you directly."

"No, no, not that. I—" "I cannot drink so often, I assure you."

"I do not ask you to drink—" "Well, you see I am smoking, but I will put another in my pocket to smoke by-and-by, if you insist," said that cheeky clown, returning.

The landlord looked at him in amazement, and being utterly overcome, he ordered up the box of cigars again.

Smith pocketed two, as before, and this confirmed the landlord in the belief that he was not all right mentally, although if he had known circus people better, he would have regarded it as only regular.

"What I was about to say, Mr. Smith, was that—" "Oh, that's all right, old man; I will drink with you presently."

"No, sir; you have drank and smoked with me all you are going to at my expense. But what I was on the point of saying—"

"Oh, I'll set 'em up. Barkeeper, produce the poison once more," said Smith, approaching the bar.

That landlord was dumbfounded. Would he ever get a chance at that cheeky clown? But, of course, while drinking with him, he could not approach him with unpleasant business, and so he drank with all the compliments.

This being over with, Smith once more started to return to the front window to finish the reading of his morning paper.

The landlord followed him. "Mr. Smith!" "Certainly."

"I think there has been a mistake." "Oh, no; I treated last."

"To be sure; but that is not what I meant to say." "All right; go ahead."

"You are subject to fits?" "Fits! fits of what?"

"Well, you understand what I mean." "No, I'll be hanged if I do."

"You have fits." "Well, yes, I do get full now and then."

"So I understand." "Well?" "I keep a first-class hotel, Mr. Smith."

"So I have heard." "And you are well fixed?"

"Well, tolerably, but what are you driving at?" asked the bewildered clown.

"You have a tent to sleep in?" "Sometimes I sleep in a tent."

"Exactly. I wish you would be good enough to sleep in it while you remain here."

"Look here, landlord," said Smith, glaring savagely at him.

"Well?" "What is your racket?"

"You have fits." "Of what?"

"Never mind, I do not wish to be personal; I only wish to protect my boarders and guests."

"What the devil do you mean?" "That's all right. I have been informed all about you. Of course it is all right for the agent to play his tricks whenever he can, but I object."

"The devil you do! Object to what?" demanded Smith, now becoming greatly interested for the first time.

"Excuse me, Mr. Smith, but I object to your being a guest in my hotel!"

"You do?" "I do."

"What is your racket?" "To keep a first-class hotel."

"But what the devil has that got to do with me?" demanded Smith, uproariously.

"You have fits?" "Fits!"

"Yes."

"I won't have it." "But you must." "Not much!" "I won't have my house disgraced."

"Well, who the devil wants you to?" "That's all right. You can't stay in my house to-night."

"Bah!" "I mean it." "Since when?"

"Since I found out about you." "Look here, landlord, or ramrod, or whatever your name is, I think you are giving me a little funny business. If that is so, all right. But don't carry it too far," said Smith, seriously.

"I am giving you no funny business, Mr. Smith. I have got a straight tip."

"Tip?" "Yes."

"From whom?" "Never mind. I have got it."

"Well, this is a racket." "No, it isn't yet, but it would be if I allowed you to remain in my hotel."

Smith was dumbfounded. What the dickens did it all mean, anyhow?

"Landlord, you are a fool!" said he. "I suppose I am. In fact, I will admit that the advertising agent for your show played it upon me, but I have been warned in time, and now I tell you that you cannot remain in my hotel. Do you understand it?"

"No, I'll be hanged if I do."

"Well, if you attempt to stay here, I will show you, that's all," said the landlord, moving away.

Smith was broken up. He could not understand it; but after finishing his paper he thought it over, and came to the conclusion that the landlord was only chaffing him, for showmen are always ready for almost anything.

Well, the show went off as usual that night, and after it all was over, Smith returned to the hotel.

Tim, in the meantime, had another "chin" with the landlord, assuring him that he would have trouble if he did not fire Smith out and insist upon his going to sleep in the circus tent.

So, when the great clown put in an appearance, the landlord and several of his porters were in wait for him.

Smith had made quite a hit that night, and he was feeling very good, but the job was up and the landlord was on hand to receive him.

There was no controversy. Smith came in.

And Smith went out, through the agency of half a dozen strong porters.

He was landed out into the street. On his head.

Badly broken up. He couldn't understand it.

Several members of the company could. He regained his feet.

That night he didn't regain anything else. He was broken up, badly.

He asked of several what it all meant. But none of them could tell him.

At all events he was fired out of that hotel, and finding no other place, he was obliged to go to the circus tent.

He got "fits" that time if he never had them before.

The next day, after ruminating over the matter for some time, he came to the conclusion that a big racket had been played upon him, and of course his object was to find out who had played it, and to get square.

But this was a difficult thing to do. Smith interviewed Tim.

"Do you know anything about it?" he asked, seriously.

"About what?" asked Tim, looking as honest as a kitten.

"About the racket?" "What racket?"

"About my having fits." "Fits!"

"Yes."

"You have 'em?" "Of course."

"What's fits?" "Hold on, Tim! Don't you know what fits are?"

"No, I'll be hanged if I do!" "Do you know the landlord?"

"Of what?" "Our hotel."

"Here?" "Of course."

"Well, I've seen him. Why?" "Somebody told him I had fits."

"Nonsense." "No, fits. Who do you suppose it was, Tim?"

"Give it up, Smitty."

"And you don't know anything about it?" asked Smith, looking into his honest face and more than half believing that he was innocent.

"Bah! Ten to one he might laugh, and regard it as a joke."

"Do you think so?" "Of course. But, Tim, you are pretty good on a racket yourself."

"Me?" "Oh, no funny business now!"

"What do you mean?" "Will you stick by me?"

"In what?" "A job."

"What's that?" "Bah! Don't you know what a job is?"

"Well, it is a—" "A racket."

"Oh, certainly! On who?" "Mum now!"

"Of course." "I suspect a certain party."

"Of what?" "This racket on me."

"Somebody put up a racket on you, eh?" said Tim, with wide open eyes.

"Yes, this fit business. Now I suspect that bloody Englishman, the duffer who pretends to lecture on something or another, and to know all about the animals in the menagerie. I suspect he has put up this job on me for a joke, and what I want is to play it back on him. See?"

"Oh, yes!" "Will you stand by me, Tim?"

"Always."

"Well, I'll work up a job on him that will make his hair curl. Now that I think of it, I suspect that he has put up many a job on me, and it is about time that I began to get even on him."

"I am with you, Mr. Smith," said Tim, and never a smile or a suspicious grin overspread his mug.

"Don't say a word, Tim, and to-morrow I will tell you how I am going to work it. Understand?"

"All the time."

CHAPTER XIV.

BEFORE Smith, the clown, had a chance to get square on the Englishman, the lecturer on the menagerie, whom he believed to be the guilty party who had put up the job on him about "fits" at Beaufort, the show had reached New Hanover, in the same state.

Smith was very indignant at the racket that had been played on him, and never suspecting our hero, Tim, he had made arrangements with him to help him work something on "English Charles," the man who did the fine and funny business for the menagerie, by way of lecturing, or giving short accounts of the different animals.

What that racket was to be, Tim had not yet found out, but that it was to be something that should overwhelm the oily-tongued Englishman, he had not the slightest doubt.

But he made up his mind that he would turn it to the Englishman's account, if possible, for he had always been a friend to him, whereas Smith had always done all he possibly could to keep him under and never give him a chance in the business.

"You are solid yet, ain't you, Tim?" asked Smith, one day, soon afterwards.

"I am always solid, Mr. Smith. But what do you mean? Why do you ask?"

"Well, you know what we were speaking of at Beaufort?"

"Oh, yes, the racket you were going to play on 'English Charles,' to get square with him."

"Exactly."

"Well?" "I'm going to play it, Tim."

"When?" "This very night."

"The deuce!" "Sure; always with me?"

"Always."

"Good boy!" said the clown, shaking him cordially by the hand.

"What is it?" "Hush!" and Smith looked cautiously around to make sure they were all alone.

"Hold on; going to do it all yourself?" "No, I want you, Tim."

"That's all right."

"But I say, Tim; do you know I have often suspected you of putting up the biggest kinds of jobs on me," said Smith, looking him squarely in the face.

"Me?" asked Tim, honestly.

"Yes, you. But you are honestly with me in this, aren't you?"

"Honest Indian."

"Always?" "Yes, and a day after."

"Good boy again."

"Well, what are you going to do?" "A big thing, Tim."

"Yes!" "You bet."

"What is it?" "I am going to break him all up."

"How?" "Hush!"

"Yes."

"Listen."

"Yes, I'm listening."

"Horsehair!" said Smith, with a peculiar exclamation.

"Horsehair!"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Chopped up!"

"Hash!"

"Yes."
 "Give 'em to him to eat?"
 "No, sleep."
 "The devil! How?"
 "Whist, now, Tim, and I will tell you about it. I read in a story paper, some time ago, how a young fellow whom they called 'Tommy Bounce,' worked a racket in this same way, and I have made up my mind that I can work it on his ribs," said Smith, becoming exceedingly confidential with him.
 "Well, how is it?"
 "You see, you want to get a lot of white hairs from a horse's tail and cut them up short and fine, and scatter them in between the bed sheets of the victim you're going to work it on."
 "Yes."

ister that Smith had been assigned to No. "23," on the same floor, and he remembered it.
 "Now, Tim, you go up to '26,' and strew this nicely in between the sheets of his bed. I will wait for you here."
 "All right," and Tim started up-stairs with a rush. "I'll teach him how to play tricks on me," muttered Smith, gritting his teeth.
 Tim knew his biz. He felt that he was acquainted with a racket that was worth two of that. So he proceeded to No. "28," and scattered the fine-cut horsehair all in between the sheets of Smith's bed, and then carefully smoothed the clothes back again so that nobody would suspect that the bed had been tampered with since being made up.
 "Did you do it?" asked Smith, when Tim came down.

"Goes back to bed again."
 "Naturally."
 "More pricks?"
 "Certainly."
 "Tumbles and figets?"
 "I should say so."
 "Can't sleep?"
 "Of course not."
 "Gets up again and looks?"
 "To be sure."
 "Still can't find anything, and concludes his blood is out of order?"
 "Yes."
 "Takes medicine?"
 "Blood purifier."
 "Yes; tries it again?"



There was no controversy. Smith came in. And Smith went out, through the agency of half a dozen porters. He was landed out in the street.

"And he goes to bed!"
 "Yes."
 "He can't see the fine bits of horsehair."
 "Yes."
 "But they find him!"
 "How?"
 "Prick him."
 "Is that so?"
 "Awfully."
 "Never heard of such a thing."
 "But it's all right, Tim. When a fellow gets undressed clear down to the buff and gets into a lot of that fodder, he will be pricked almost to death. See?"
 "Well, I should think so."
 "Now, that is all right, I have got the whole thing fixed."
 "Where?"
 "Right here," replied Smith, taking a small packet from his pocket.
 "What is it?"
 "Minced horse."
 "Meat?"
 "No, horsehair."
 "Oh!"
 "Now, I propose to find his room, and sprinkle this fine-cut horsehair in between the sheets of his bed."
 "Good racket!"
 "Will you do it?"
 "Certainly. Nothing would please me better," said Tim, earnestly.
 "Bully!"
 "Do you know his room?"
 "No, but we can find it out from the clerk. Come along," he added, taking Tim by the arm and hurrying him towards the hotel office.
 Here they ascertained that "English Charley," as he was called, had been assigned to room No. "26," and Smith was happy.
 Tim, in the meantime, had seen from the hotel reg-

"You bet," he replied.
 "Spread it all over?"
 "Yes, and when he gets into that bed, he will think he has struck a bed of nettles."
 "Good enough! Now we will quietly give it away to the fellows and wait up to see the fun, eh?"
 "You bet! Oh, it will be bully!"
 "Ha-ha!" and Smith laughed until the tears came to his eyes.
 And that was no "professional laugh"—no old-fashioned funny business, but it was what he considered a new and a good thing.
 "Just think of it!"
 And Tim laughed quite as heartily as Smith was doing, for, to tell the truth, he was thinking of it, and what fun there would be when the thing got to working.
 "He will get into bed?"
 "Yes."
 "Rolls and tumbles?"
 "Yes."
 "Can't sleep?"
 "No."
 "Feels awfully prickly?"
 "Yes."
 "Thinks there are bed-bugs in the bed?"
 "Cert."
 "Gets up to shoot 'em?"
 "Yes."
 "Lights a light?"
 "Yes."
 "Can't find a thing?"
 "No."
 "Scratches himself?"
 "Yes."
 "Concludes he has got prickly-heat?"
 "Yes."
 "Goes and takes a bath?"
 "Of course."

"No sleep."
 "Nary. But we can be where we can see the fun."
 "You bet."
 "And we will keep him up all night. That's the way I will get square with him, and I will hint it to him afterwards."
 "A great graft, Mr. Smith!" said Tim, and Smith laughed until the tears rolled down his cheeks some more, for if there was anything in the world that delighted him, it was to play a practical joke on somebody.
 And Tim laughed, for he had good cause to do so, much better than Smith, if he had only known it.
 Well, after things were thus arranged, Smith went to certain members of the company, who were quartered at the hotel, and hinted to them very strongly that they would see some fun that night in the room of one of the "menagerie fakers," as the circus folks used to call those engaged in the other branches of the show business.
 As a natural consequence, they supposed that Smith had put up a job on somebody, and as show people generally enjoy those things quite as well as any other class of people in the world—several of the riders and tumblers concluded to take it in and see how much it measured up.
 Now it must not be supposed that Tumbling Tim was idle during this time, for the first thing he did after he fixed Smith's bed was to go to "English Charley" and tell him all about the racket from first to last.
 And together they told several of their friends who were quartered at the hotel, and the result was that about a dozen quiet but expectant people were in waiting to see the fun.
 But, of course, in order to get the thing to working, "English Charley" had to go to bed first. Smith was waiting for him to do so, and the moment he did, he and the whole party ranged themselves in the hallway

and in adjacent rooms in order to witness his discomfiture.

"Now wait and you will see some fun," said he, earnestly. "Only wait until he gets to bed!" "You bet!" suggested Tim. "Only wait until he gets to bed," and the wink he gave while looking straight at Smith, created a laugh, for they all knew about what the racket was.

"English Charley" went to bed. Smith listened at his door. He heard him get into bed, and he shook his finger at the gathered company, warning them not to explode when the fun began.

But somehow or other the fun did not begin. Smith listened and kept on listening, but there was no disturbance in the room of "English Charley."

"Are you certain that you fixed it all right, Tim?" asked Smith, in a whisper.

"Oh, I know I did," replied Tim.

"Funny," mused the clown.

"Guess he is too full to feel 'em," said one of the expectant waiters.

"Must be. We hadn't ought to have let him take a drop," mused Smith.

But they waited and waited. Still there was no sound of disturbance in the showman's room, and finally they heard him snoring loudly.

That settled it. There was no fun to be had there, and poor Smith, utterly crestfallen, was compelled to admit that the chances were pretty slim, although in all probability it would occur some time between then and morning.

But none of them felt inclined to sit up and wait an uncertain length of time for an uncertain amount of fun, and so one by one they sought their rooms as though disgusted.

Completely disgusted and all broken up himself, Smith at length sought his own bed. Evidently the whole joke had miscarried, because the intended victim had gone to bed too full to feel the way it worked.

But those who had been waiting to see the fun at Smith's suggestion, now began to gather around the door of his room, headed by Tim.

Smith, utterly disgusted, blew out his light and tumbled into bed. He had kept perfectly sober in order to see the fun which his intended victim was expected to kick up, and so he was in prime condition to furnish it to the listeners.

He had scarcely got settled before he began to feel the pricking of the fine-cut horsehair.

Then he turned over, but the pricking was even sharper, so he rolled over to the other side of the bed.

Here he met as much trouble as ever, and as the night was rather hot, he concluded that he was troubled with prickly heat, and so threw off the bed clothing.

Even entirely uncovered, the same terrible pricking and itching tormented him, and he finally got up and took a sponge bath, hoping for relief.

Relief, however, did not come, for no sooner had he returned to bed again than the same unbearable torment seized him and made life a burden.

The gang was outside of his door, listening to it all, and they could hear his muttered oaths very plainly.

Finally he got wild and rang his bell furiously for a servant.

The boys dodged into their rooms out of sight as the servant came up, but they were where they could hear everything.

"Confound this bed!" they heard him exclaim, after the servant had announced himself. "It is full of bugs."

"Bugs, sir?" said the servant.

"Yes, bugs."

"Sir, we have no bugs in this hotel."

Well, then, you have got fleas here."

"No, sir, we do not entertain those lively insects here. You must be mistaken."

"Not a bit of it. Here I have been vainly trying to get asleep for the past two hours, but it is impossible."

"Perhaps you are not sleepy, sir."

"Yes, I am. Confound it, I never was so sleepy in my life. But I tell you there are some insects in this bed."

The servant took a look at it, but of course there was nothing visible.

"You are certainly mistaken, sir, for we are very particular with our bedding."

"But the moment I lie down I feel a prickly sensation."

"Well, you have most likely got the prickly heat. All northern people are subject to it when they come south at this season of the year."

"But I have taken a bath."

"Then perhaps your blood is out of order. Suppose you try a dose of rhubarb?"

Smith thought for a moment.

"I don't know."

"Or suppose I send our doctor up to see you?" suggested the servant.

"Bah! What do I want of a doctor?"

"You seem to be out of sorts and most likely he could give you something that would fix you all right."

"Oh, go to the devil! I will try it again!" said he, pushing the servant out of the room and closing the door.

Once more he tried it, but with no better success than before. For half an hour longer he rolled and tumbled over his bed, but all the while that stinging, prickling sensation tormented him.

He never tumbled to it that it was the very same experience that he had intended for "English Charley," and finally, unable to stand it any longer, he rang the bell for the servant and summoned the doctor.

"Doctor, I have got something," said he, when that functionary appeared.

"You have, eh? Let me feel of your pulse. Ah! very high. Run out your tongue."

Smith obeyed with about half a yard of taster.

"You have got insomnia!"

"What?" exclaimed Smith, seizing the astonished doctor by the throat. "Be very careful what you say, doctor, for I am not a man to be trifled with."

"Well, if it isn't that, it is jim-jams!" said the astonished physician, freeing himself from the clown's grasp.

"It is a lie, sir! I am not a drinking man."

"Well, then, it's insomnia."

"You don't say so, doctor?"

"But I do."

"Where could I have caught it?"

The doctor laughed.

"What is insomnia, anyway?"

"Inability to sleep."

"But I tell you I never had it in my life before, and I was never so sleepy since I was born."

"Well, why don't you sleep?"

"Can't do it. The moment I lie down on my bed a terrible pricking sensation comes upon me, and I might as well try to sleep in a bed of nettles."

"Oh, you are in a highly nervous state, that's all; I will give you a sedative draught that will make you all right," and he at once proceeded to fix it for him.

Smith was very uncertain, anyway, and thinking that perhaps the doctor might be right, he consented to take the draught.

But it was a strong one, under the effects of which a man might sleep on the ragged edge of a picket fence.

And so he managed to get to sleep, although his last sensations were of that same "prickly heat," and when he awoke in the morning, he felt the same sensation.

The gang had enjoyed it all until Smith finally went to sleep, when, full of fun and laughter, they did the same.

But Tim was determined to cover up his tracks, and so when all was quiet, he went to work and changed the numbers on the doors (they being simply painted on tin), so that "English Charley's" number corresponded with the hotel register, after which he went to bed, laughing and happy.

CHAPTER XV.

Poor clown, Smith, was a sick-looking man when he put in an appearance the following morning, and what made him look even sicker yet, he saw a broad grin on the face of every member of the company with whom he came in contact.

Especially was the mug of "English Charley," on whom he had attempted to play the racket of the fine-cut horsehair, thus ornamented, and finally he got mad.

"How did you sleep last night, Mr. Smith?" he finally asked.

"What is that to you?" growled Smith.

"Oh, nothing! I merely asked out of friendship, that's all."

"Friendship!" grunted Smith.

"I heard you were ill in the night, and had to call a doctor."

"The devil you did! Who told you?"

"Well, I don't know—the porter, I think."

"Oh, he be hanged!"

"He said you were troubled with a pricking sensation that prevented you from sleeping. Is that so?"

"Well, what of it?"

"Nothing, only I was going to tell you that I have been troubled that way."

"You have?"

"Yes, but it didn't amount to anything."

"How so?"

"Well, it amounted to only this. Some fellows put up a job on me."

"A job?"

"Yes, they took some white horsehair, and after cutting it up fine, they placed it between my bed-sheets, and it kept me rolling and tumbling all night, and drove sleep ten miles away."

Smith grew white, then red, and then black, but finally uttering a "Bah!" he turned and walked away.

But wasn't he sick, though?

Then he tumbled.

Then he understood that the trick he had intended to play on "English Charley" had been played upon himself.

How could it have happened?

He looked at the hotel register, but the number on the door of his room corresponded with it, as did that of "English Charley," and the only conclusion he could arrive at was that he had made a mistake, and been caught in his own trap.

But had Tumbling Tim anything to do with it?

He hated to ask him for fear he did, but he was so mad that he wanted to bite somebody.

"I say, Tim, have you seen 'English Charley' this morning?" he finally asked, as they met next day.

"No; why?"

Smith looked at him sharply.

"Wonder how he slept last night?"

Still Smith eyed him and made no reply.

"Wonder if he felt the pricklers when he awoke this morning?" asked Tim, keeping his face as straight as a wooden man's.

"Tim, I suspect a job," said he, finally.

"A job?"

"A trick."

"Trick?"

"A sell."

"On who?"

"On me."

"The deuce! How?"

"Don't you know anything about it?"

"Me? Nixy."

"Honest Indian?"

"Yes. What was it?"

"Well, you know you put that chopped horsehair in his bed?"

"Yes."

"But you didn't, though."

"Why, yes, I did; I went to the very room you told me to."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Cert; the same one put down to him on the hotel register. You told me which, and I saw the number on the door," said Tim, all honesty.

"Ah! but there's where I suspect the job came in."

"How?"

"I asked the hotel clerk about it, and after looking at the tin numbers on the two doors—No. 28 and No. 26—he said that they had been changed by somebody unknown to him, and the result was that I got into the room assigned to 'English Charley,' and he got into mine."

"You don't tell me so?"

"Yes, by thunder! and when I went to bed, I would swear everything was all right and regular."

"Well, that's funny," mused Tim.

"Funny! Well, the idea may be funny, but the realization of it was not a bit funny, I assure you."

"And so you slept in his bed?"

"Yes; but although I tumbled and fidgeted around all night until after the doctor gave me a sleeping potion, I never suspected the real truth, and I might never have tumbled at all, if 'Charley' hadn't given me the cue by telling me how somebody had played such a game on him."

"Did he admit that he knew anything about the business?"

"No, not in so many words, but he looked as though he did. Now, how could he have found out?"

"I give it up, old man, but I think he must have found out about it in some way or other, and changed the numbers of the doors so that his room would be yours and yours his."

"But I tell you they were all right when I went to bed."

"Guess you are mistaken," said Tim, shaking his head, thoughtfully.

"But I know better. The room I went into corresponded with the number assigned to me on the hotel register. Those numbers were changed after I went to bed, and I know it. Now, the question is, who did it?"

"Hang me if I know, or can see how it could be done without making noise enough to awaken you and the rest of us. But I have an idea," he added.

"About what?"

"The racket."

"Who is it?"

"English Charley."

"What do you think?"

"Hush! I'll bet a ten dollar note that I am right. Yesterday afternoon."

"Well?"

"After we had put up the job."

"Well?"

"You told several of the company to look out for fun at the hotel."

"Yes."

"Well, that's it."

"How?"

"They talked it over and it got to his ears somehow, and naturally enough he began to think and look around to see if he could find out about it and if the fun was to be at his expense. He looked all over his room for a job, and finally into his bed and found the horsehair."

Smith was thoughtful and serious.

"Then he saw the racket and went to work to change the numbers on the doors. That's how it was, I'll bet."

"The devil!" ejaculated Smith, for Tim's argument was sound and good.

"There's where the mistake was, in saying anything about it."

"That's so, Tim. But I'll get hunk with that English duffer yet."

"So would I, if I was in your place. But you must keep it all to yourself if you want to succeed."

"Yes, that's so. I am devilish sorry I didn't do so in this case."

"If you had we should have had fun enough for a whole show."

"Now, what the devil can I do to get square with the duffer?" he mused.

"Hang me if I know. But don't bring me into it if you think I would give you away."

"Oh, that's all right, Tim. I didn't know but that you might have been in the racket just for a little fun, for I know you are on such things."

"Well, what of it? Couldn't I have had just as much fun with him as I could with you, and more too?"

"Yes, of course."

"Well, then, what did I want to go back on a friend for?"

"That's so. But never mind, Tim, I'll get even with him yet," said Smith, as they parted company.

The affair created any amount of fun in both parts of the company, and the laugh was loudly and clearly on Smith, who bore it as best he could, while all the time trying to think how he might get the laugh on "English Charley."

Well, things went on about as usual, until they reached Charleston, South Carolina, where they were to show for three nights, but during all this time Smith was nursing his wrath to keep it warm against "English Charley."

Here a large number of both companies were quartered in an old-fashioned tavern, nearly every room of which contained a big, old-time fire-place, ample enough in size for a store-room.

English Charley had one of those big chambers assigned him, it being next to the roof, and on the first night there several of the company gathered in his room after the show, for some punch and a few games of poker.

Smith was among the number, as was his friend Tim, and naturally enough the conversation turned upon the quaint old tavern, built long before the revolution, and its huge fire-places.

There was no fire in it on this occasion, and Smith stooped and looked up the chimney. The clear sky was visible.

"I'll tell you what, boys, I shouldn't like to occupy this room if I had anything about me worth stealing," said he.

"Why not?" asked Charley.

bed, I am going to crawl out upon the roof with it on and finally down the chimney, where I will scare the life out of him almost. See?"

"Great graft!" exclaimed Tim, giving him his hand.

"Isn't it big?"

"Best thing I ever heard in my life."

"You bet."

"Why, he'll squeal like a pig."

"He'll yell murder."

"And rush wildly down-stairs."

"He'll arouse the whole house."

"He'll swear that the devil is after him, and everybody'll get scared and swear he has got the jimjams."

"That's it; and I can skip into my own room out of sight, pull off my dress, and appear as innocent as a loon."

that Smith could not keep it all to himself, and so hinted to several of his friends that they would see some fun at the tavern that night.

It was past midnight, and everybody about the tavern was apparently asleep.

Smith and Tim were in his room at work, making up for the racket, and after the finishing touches had been put on, if ever a being did look like the devil, Smith actually did. The dress was fire-red, furnished with horns and tail, while the eyes in the mask looked like balls of fire.

"That will frighten the stuffing out of him," said Tim, standing off and taking a look at Smith.

"Now, let me get up on the roof and you will presently see some fun."

Stealing from Smith's room, the door of which Tim



The gang was outside of his door, listening to it all.

"Because it would be the easiest thing in the world for a robber to gain the roof of the ranche and come down the chimney into the room, gobble things and skip out."

Two or three others looked up the big chimney, and agreed with Smith that such a robbery could be easily accomplished.

But the subject was finally dropped, and after remaining in the room for a few minutes longer, the company separated for the night, and Charley was left alone.

Smith, however, could scarcely sleep at all. He had a big idea that was struggling in his brain. But he managed to keep it until morning, when he met Tim, soon after breakfast.

"Tim, I've got it!" said he, eagerly.

"Got what?"

"A racket."

"You don't tell me so?"

"Fact; a big one."

"Who on?"

"That English duffer."

"Good. What is it?"

"Mum, now."

"Oh, dumb as a clam!" replied Tim.

"You know the big fire-place and chimney in his room?"

"Yes."

"All right. I'm going to work a racket down that chimney."

"The devil?"

"That's it exactly, Tim."

"What is it?"

"The devil, to be sure," said he, laughing.

"Well, the devil take me if I can get the drift of your racket, anyhow."

"I'll tell you, for I am going to work it this very night. I have got a Satan dress in my trunk, and to-night, after the show, and after Charley has gone to

"Oh, it will be big sport."

"Don't forget it. But keep mum and you will see me play the biggest racket on that duffer that ever was."

"All right."

"Keep awake and you'll see it."

"Oh, you bet I won't miss a good thing like that," replied Tim.

With this understanding they separated, and Smith wore a grin on his mug all the remainder of the day.

But Tim, of course, could not keep such a racket as that to himself any more than he could fly, especially as he saw another chance to turn the joke upon his old enemy, so without unnecessary loss of time he sought out "English Charley" and told him all about it.

"Oh, that's all right, Tim," said Charley, after listening to his story. "I'll give him a 'devil' of a reception if he attempts to play the 'devil' with me; I suppose this is to get hunk, as he calls it, for the horsehair joke."

"Yes, he thinks you found out about it and turned the tables on him."

"All right; if he attempts to come down my chimney, dressed as the devil, I'll make it as warm for him as the old devil himself could stand. But you are a devil of a joker, Tim," he added, admiringly.

"No, he is the devil of a joker."

"I guess the gang will think so before the thing is through with. You must help him all you can."

"Oh, cert, I'll help him up on the roof."

"I hope he won't fall and break his neck until I get a whack at him."

"I'll see to that."

And so it was all arranged. But that night after the show Charley went to the property man and borrowed a big stuffed club, which he secreted under his long coat, and took it up to his room.

In the meantime, however, the thing was so good

was careful to lock without his knowing it, he went out into the hall, at the far end of which an open window enabled him to step out upon the roof of an extension, and from that it was an easy matter to reach the roof of the main building.

Tim darted back as soon as he was well out of sight, and tapped on Charley's door, which was quickly opened by him.

"It's all right. His nibs is on the roof," said he, in a whisper.

"Good! Now lay low for some fun," replied Charley, darting back, but not locking his door.

He was in his night-shirt, and as soon as Tim had gone he got into bed again.

Presently he heard a noise in the chimney, which he knew of course to be Smith gradually working his way down. But he fondled his big stuffed club and waited.

"English Charles—English Charles!" he soon heard in guttural tones coming from the chimney, just above the fire-place, where Smith had secured a footing.

"Eh! who's there?" demanded Charley, in tones of fear.

"The Father of Evil!" was the grim reply.

"Oh, Lord! What do you want?"

"I have come for your soul!"

"Where are you?"

"Here!" thundered Smith, suddenly dropping down into the fire-place and leaping into the room.

Without doubt, had Charley not been posted, this almost unearthly appearance in such a dramatic and sensational way, would have given him a great fright.

"Oh, Lord! What is it—who are you?" he asked, sitting up in bed.

The lamp was burning dimly, and Smith looked every inch a devil of the first bake.

"I am the devil!" he howled.

"The devil you are? All right," and leaping from

his bed, Charley seized the stuffed club and went for him.

He knocked him all over the room. He banged him in all sorts of ways, and so sudden and unexpected was the attack, that he could scarcely catch his breath. But the instant he did so, he began to yell murder and cry for help.

At this Charley hit him again, and knocked him over a washstand, breaking it and nearly breaking the joker's neck at the same time.

"Hold on, Charley! it is me!" he cried, seeing that the game was up.

"Yes, I know it is," replied Charley, giving him another bang that almost knocked him senseless.

He couldn't stand that sort of business any longer, and thinking to escape to his own room, he opened the door and darted out into the entry, closely followed by Charley.

The entry was crowded with people, mostly Smith's friends, who were on the watch for "fun." He rushed wildly for the door of his own room, but it was locked, and as that stuffed club was still descending upon him with unabated fury, he turned and started for down-stairs, yelling and closely pursued.

"Murder—murder! help—help!" he yelled, going down three stairs at a leap. "Save me—save me!"

By this time the whole house was aroused and seeking the cause of the trouble, but when they saw what they naturally supposed to be the devil, they yelled in turn and darted into the rooms, all those not in the racket.

Reaching the office down-stairs, he tried to elude his pursuer, but all to no purpose, for he followed close upon his heels, and was giving him a bang at every jump.

Such another sensation was never kicked up in a hotel before. Women screamed, children cried, porters ran to hide, and it was not until some of the more nervy men gathered around and made Charley stop that the cries ceased.

"What the devil does this mean?" the landlord demanded, as soon as there was a lull in the yells.

"This is the devil. He came down the chimney into my room, and I went for him, that's all," replied Charley, panting.

Smith did not stop to offer any explanation, but at the first opportunity, he lit out and flew up-stairs to his room, the door of which was now locked.

CHAPTER XVI.

RUSHING into his room, Smith locked the door without loss of time, and then, almost utterly prostrated by the beating he had received at the hands of English Charley with his stuffed club, he fell upon the bed and wished that he was dead.

It will be remembered that this was a racket that Smith, the clown, had attempted to play on English Charley, in the guise and make-up of the devil, he having made his way to the roof and from there let himself down the big, old-fashioned chimney into his room.

But having been posted by Tim, Charley was ready, and he gave him what might be called a devil of a reception.

The whole house was in arms, and the members of the circus company, as well as those of the menagerie, of which Charley was one of the head ones, were there, wild with laughter, which fact did much to allay the fear and excitement of the other guests.

Smith had not only put up the job on English Charley, but he had invited several of his friends to be present that night and see the fun he had in store for them.

Oh, there was lots of fun—for the others, but poor Smith was all broken up. It was worse than the horse-hair racket, and covered with bangs and bruises, he slowly got out of his devil's costume, and wondered if there was any place on earth in which he could hide his head.

"Did ever a fellow have such confounded luck as I have? I swear I will never attempt to play a practical joke on anybody again as long as I live," he muttered. "And now how the boys will have the laugh on me. I've a devilish good mind to throw up my engagement and go back to New York. Oh, ah! how sore I am. It's a wonder that he didn't kill me. Augh! he has pounded me to a jelly," he added, as he took off his dress and viewed his naked figure in the glass. "Hark! by thunder, I hear the gang laughing down-stairs. They had some fun, after all, but at my expense instead of Charley's. What an ass I am! Well, laugh away; I am not sure but that I should do the same thing if I were one of you," said he, as the noise of the laughter down-stairs swelled in volume until it filled the whole tavern.

Bruised in every part of his body, and aching in every joint, he blew out his light and tumbled into bed with a sigh of relief.

And here he began to think of the shallow failure he had made of his joke on English Charley. What was it he had beaten him with? How came his door locked when he attempted to enter it as he darted from Charley's room? and how happened it to be open when he returned to it after his sad experience down-stairs?

These were conundrums which he could not answer, and after asking them over and over, he finally fell asleep and forgot his misery.

The gang down-stairs, however, did not feel sleepy, any more than did the guests at the house, and laughed until they were sore. They all got their money's worth out of that snap, sure, and felt that Smith didn't owe them a cent.

The next morning when Smith awoke at the sound of the first bell, he was so sore and stiff that he could scarcely move a limb.

"Augh! I'm all broken up," he growled. "Tim

will have to take my place to-night certain, for I can't do anything. Oh, what a fool I was! Catch me in any snap like that again."

He managed, however, to crawl out of bed and into his clothes, but it was a tough job, for he could only move with the greatest difficulty.

There were no other members of the company stirring when he went down-stairs, but there was not a servant or the mug of anybody else that his eyes rested on that did not have a big grin on, and the worst of it was, he knew what the grin was about.

But he stifled his feelings the best he could, and taking a newspaper, he went out upon the piazza to read and enjoy the cool morning air, all the while hoping that it would be a balm to his wounded body.

When breakfast was ready he rushed into the dining-room, hoping to get through with it before any of the gang had time to get down, but in this he again made a miscalculation, for scarcely had he got seated before Tim, English Charley, and several of the others walked in and took seats.

But they were all looking as glum as so many owls. Smith did not notice them, and so the wink went around.

"Good-morning, Mr. Smith," said English Charley, most respectfully.

"Morning," grunted Smith, without looking up.

"Where were you last night, Mr. Smith?"

"In bed, of course. Why?"

"Why? Weren't you disturbed?"

"No."

"Didn't hear the terrible rumpus?"

"No."

"Why, it was enough to raise the dead; I raised the 'devil' last night."

Smith never looked up from his plate.

"Yes, sir, the Old Nick himself. I was sleeping quietly when he came down the chimney into my room."

Smith made no reply.

"Well, what did you do?" asked Tim, bound to help the conversation along.

"Do! Why, I knocked the stuffing out of him," replied Charley.

"Why, then the devil is really dead now, is he?" asked Stickney, the rider.

"Well, I hardly think he is dead yet, but I know I made him awfully sick."

"Then he must be a monk now?"

"How so?"

"Don't you remember the couplet?"

"When the devil is sick, the devil a monk would be,
When the devil is well, a devil a monk is he."

"Don't you remember it?"

"Oh, yes; I think I have heard it. Do you remember it, Mr. Smith?" he asked, winking at the lads and turning to him.

"Bah! I never charge my mind with such nonsensical things," he growled.

"Ah! well, I wish you had been awake to see the fun. I tell you I made it quite as lively for the old boy as he ever made it for anybody else in this world."

"Yes, Smithy, you ought to have been there," said Stickney. "You would have enjoyed it hugely," at which there was a loud laugh the whole length of the table.

Smith glanced at Tim, who was one of the loudest laughers, and at once made up his mind that he had something to do with the failure of his joke, as, in all probability, he had with the horsehair racket.

But he said nothing, although he kept up a devil of a thinking, and made up his mind to get so good and even with him that he would be the sickest showman that ever lived, and be glad to cry quits.

"Just think of it, Smith," said Charley. "The idea of having the devil come down the chimney into your room."

"Well, I suppose he knows his own," said Smith, without looking from his plate.

"They say he does, but I think he made a mistake last night," replied Charley, whereat there was another laugh.

Smith, however, paid no attention to it. He was too mad to trust himself, and was thinking how he could get square with Tumbling Tim, whom he felt sure gave him away.

True enough, the old man was so lame and broken up that Tim had to take his place that night, but he resigned it willingly, for he had thought out a racket that he could play on him, that would partially, if not wholly, make him square.

Of course, whenever Tim took his place as clown, he had to "make up," with Smith's utensils, not having any paint of his own, and in order to carry out the joke he had concocted, he went to a drug store and bought some sort of acid and mixed it with his paint in such a way as to make the color penetrate the skin and become indelible—that is, so that it could not be washed off.

Tim fell into the trap and made up his clown face with the preparation, and went into the ring as usual to go through with his business, as he had so often done.

But after the show had begun, Smith, who was in the dressing tent, threw away the remainder of the concoction, filling his paint cups with the regular preparation so as not to excite suspicion, and then, with a grim smile of satisfaction on his face, he waited to see how the old thing worked.

Tim got through with his business and went to the water-pail to wash up. He soaped and rubbed his face as usual, and thinking it clean (he had done the same thing so many times) he proceeded to wipe off and get into his everyday clothes again, which he was by this time enabled to do without looking into a mirror.

In fact, it is a rare thing for an old circus faker to bother himself about looking into a mirror, for they get so used to washing up that they can generally do it effectually without looking, and Tim had become almost as perfect as any of them. It was bother enough to have to look into a little piece of looking-glass while putting the paint on, not to care about doing it when washing it off.

So he dressed himself and started for the hotel alone. The night was dark, and the streets badly lighted, consequently nobody saw his indelible make-up, or if they did, they failed to speak of it.

On arriving at the hotel he found nearly all of the company there ahead of him, and the moment he showed himself in the bar-room there was a laugh.

"What are you cackling about?" he asked, looking from one to the other.

"Guess you were in a hurry to-night," suggested Stickney, laughing.

"Why?"

"Why! In the name of all that is funny, why didn't you wash up?" asked Smith, pretending to look shocked.

"Wash up! What's your racket?"

A loud laugh from the members of the company and the loungers about the tavern who had gathered around startled him.

"Look in the glass," suggested English Charley.

Tim turned to one and took a look. There was his mug, just as he had made it up for the clown business.

"Thunder and blazes!" he muttered, and another laugh followed.

"Good make-up, Tim," said Charley.

"Oh, but you hadn't ought to give the business away in that manner," said Smith.

"No, never take the 'shop' out of the tent," suggested Stickney.

Tim looked from one to the other, but without speaking a word.

"Oh, he saw a girl, I suppose, and was in such a hurry to follow her that he forgot to wash off," said Smith, laughing heartily.

"That's devilish funny," said Tim.

"Not outside it isn't, but in the ring it does very well."

"I washed off as usual."

"You did! What are you giving us?"

"I am sure I did."

A derisive laugh was his reward.

"I don't understand it."

"Go and wash your face," said Mr. Lent, who had come upon the scene and took the whole thing in at a glance.

"That's awfully queer," muttered Tim, as he started for the wash-room.

Here he washed and scrubbed himself with soap, looking into the mirror every now and then to see if the color was removed, but he could not start it. What the mischief did it mean?

He finally got both discouraged and disgusted, and rejoined his merry fellows with not a particle of the paint removed.

They greeted him with looks of astonishment, for in addition to his make-up, and showing clearly through it, they could see the look of horror and inquiry upon his features.

"What is the matter, Tim?" asked English Charley, the first to speak.

"That's what I would like to know," said he, in a half-despairing tone of voice.

"Why don't you wash?"

"Devil take it, I have washed myself with soap, but I can't get it off," said he.

Nothing more sympathetic than a laugh came in response.

"Oh, you are giving us a little funny business on the outside," said Stickney.

"Wants people to know that he is the clown," said Smith, a little sarcastic.

"Oh, you go to the devil! This is some put-up job," said Tim, angrily.

"Put-up job! I should say it was a put-on job," said Mr. Lent.

"But whatever it is, I can't get it off, and I think Smith has played a trick on me to get hunk."

"Oh, you do, eh? What have I had to do with it?" asked the old clown.

"Well, I don't know."

"You made up with my paint?"

"Yes."

"Well, my paint washes off all right."

"I don't care. I think it's a job."

"No, it cannot be. Nobody in the company has jobs played on them but me," said Smith.

That settled it in Tim's mind, and although Smith would not admit it, he felt certain that he had made up some sort of color for him that would not wash off.

It was a terrible racket, and while he still rubbed his face with a towel before the mirror, he began to feel sick, and to think that his rackets were all paid back to him with good big interest. What if that paint could never be removed? What a specimen of humanity he would be!

The company laughed and laughed at his expense, as did the loungers, and poor Tim was "sick." All the hurrahs and snaps that he had ever played on Smith were as nothing compared to this, that he had evidently played on him. What should he do?

There was nothing but jokes and laughter at his expense, and so he retired to his own room, sad and disgusted, but all the while hoping that something would happen to get him out of his ridiculous trouble.

So, when alone, he washed himself once more and rubbed his skin until he nearly peeled the skin off, but still the paint remained just as bright and glaring as it

ever was, and he would have cried if he had not been so awfully mad.

"Oh, won't I make him sick for this?" he muttered. "I know he fixed that paint somehow so that it will not wash off, but if ever I get out of this snap, I will make him so sick that he will give away his salary."

Enraged almost beyond endurance, he finally undressed and went to bed. But it was a long time before he could get to sleep. In fact, it was nearly morning before he finally forgot his troubles, and didn't know whether he was a clown or a parson.

But on waking a few hours afterwards he again viewed himself in the glass.

That same comical but now horrible make-up presented itself. What in the name of goodness was he to do? It would never do to appear in public in that

"Won't you send one to my room?"

"Well, will you promise me not to play any more jokes?"

"Yes, of course."

"All right, then; I will go and see a doctor, and tell him all about your case. Perhaps he can remove it, but I have my doubts, for I think it is something that has penetrated the skin, and cannot be removed. However, I will see what can be done," said the manager, going from the room.

Poor Tim waited for a long time, the prey to all sorts of fears, but at the end of about two hours a physician, who had been informed of the case by Mr. Lent, put in an appearance.

He examined him and questioned him for some time, and finally came to the conclusion that nothing would

out of his skin, he had only to submit to it, and take the fun that was made of him as best he could.

But oh! wouldn't he get awfully good and square with that Smith!

Nevertheless, he was a laughing stock for the entire company during the next two weeks, during which time, however, the poultice had the desired effect, and the indelible paint was removed, and Tim was once more himself, although he was a great deal paler than formerly, and he looked decidedly "sickly" on account of the "pull" it had given him.

But he gradually became himself once more, and the racket on him little by little was forgotten.

But by the time they reached Charleston things began to work again in the old way, and Smith had not yet left off the grin which the old racket had given him.



He turned and started down stairs, closely pursued. "Murder! help!" he yelled, going down three stairs at a leap. "Save me—save me!"

way, but how was he to avoid it? He could not even go down to breakfast.

After thinking the matter over for some time, he was on the point of sending for some flesh-colored paint and covering his face all over with it to hide the deformity, when Mr. Lent came to his room.

Tim explained to him all he knew about the matter, but still insisted that Smith had worked the racket on him out of spite on account of his success, or for some other reason.

"Well, Tim, I hope this will teach you a lesson," said Mr. Lent.

"A lesson! What about?"

"Practical joking."

"I don't catch on, sir."

"You don't! How many rackets have you played on Smith since you have been with the circus?"

Tim was thoughtful for a moment, and then you could see a smile beneath the comical make-up.

"Now I don't say that Smith put up this job on you, for somebody else might have done it. You know very well that there are several members of the company who owe you one or two, and perhaps they are the ones who worked this snap. But at all events, it shows you what foolishness it is to go at these practical jokes. You are forever at something of the kind, and now I hope you have got a belly full in return."

"Guess I have," said Tim, glancing at himself in the looking-glass.

"Now will you throw up your hands and stop it?"

"What! wouldn't you have me get hunk with the old duffer for this dirty trick?"

"Dirty! I should rather say artistic; you have a standing make-up now."

"Well, but can I ever get this devilish stuff off my face?" asked Tim, anxiously.

"That I don't know. It may possibly wear off in time."

"Thunder! can't a doctor get it off?"

"I don't know."

remove the stain from his skin but a certain kind of poultice in which his face would have to be bound for at least two days.

It was a terrible blow to Tim, but the doctor told him that there was no help for it, and no other way of removing the trouble, so he was obliged to submit to it.

But what a nice looking plum he was with that big poultice on!

His mug was about twice its usual size, and no one could look at him without laughing, such a comical-looking duck was he.

Of course the members of the company all called on him in his room for the purpose of sympathizing with him, but a more uproarious crowd never congregated.

Smith was specially tender towards him, and after assuring him that he had made up out of the same paints, and removed them without any difficulty, he pretended to feel very sorry for him.

"Oh, now that's all right, old man. You are in this racket, and I understand it," said Tim, speaking with great difficulty, while struggling with his poulticed chops, and oh, how they did laugh at him! "But don't you let it slip your mind that I will get awfully good and even with you."

His struggle in getting off this speech was so comical that it made them all roar with laughter.

"I mean it, and don't you forget it," said he.

CHAPTER XVII.

NOTHING of any importance happened until the circus and menagerie reached Charleston, South Carolina.

The trick that Smith, the clown, played on Tumbling Tim, to pay him off for the dozens he had played on him, will be remembered.

Poor Tim went around with that poultice on his mug for three days and nights, all the while presenting the most ludicrous appearance imaginable. But as it was the only way whereby he could get the indelible paint

He felt that he had worked the greatest snap that had ever been given out in the business, and of course he was happy.

Tim, however, was watching his chances, and he felt most terribly in earnest about getting square with his old enemy.

He had stood the laugh long enough, and had been as sick as he intended to be.

"Well, Tim, you seem to be all right again," said Bob Stickney one day.

"Oh, yes, I'm all right," he replied.

"It was the roughest practical joke that I ever knew played on anybody in my life."

"Well, it was a little rough, that's a fact. Have you any idea who worked it?"

"No; have you?"

"Yes."

"Smith?"

"Yes, who else could do it?"

"It don't seem as though anybody but he could do it, but yet you can't prove it against him."

"Give him a chance and he will prove it against himself."

"Well, I guess you are right, cully."

"You just wait awhile and see."

"All right, and if you find out that he put up the job, what then?"

"Wait and see, Mr. Stickney."

"Yes, and if I can assist you any just let me know, cully."

"Good enough; much obliged."

The great horseman disliked the clown as much as Tim or any one else did, and he was always ready to work against him.

One of Tim's chums, a tumbler in the circus, was also a sort of hail fellow well met with Bill Smith, especially when there was any drinking going on, and Tim arranged with Ben, which was the fellow's name, to draw Smith out after getting him good and mellow to see if he would admit putting the trick on him.

The result was that Ben got Smith drunk and succeeded in picking the truth out of him, and so reported to Tim.

"But you mustn't give me away, Tim, for then he would be down on me," said he.

"Oh, I won't give you away, Ben, you needn't have any fears on that score."

"But you can work it all the same."

"You bet, and perhaps you will help me if I should need a hand?"

"Cert."

"All right, I'll let you know if I want you."

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know yet, but I'll work up some sort of a racket on him."

"You see he suspects that it was you who worked the horsehair snap on him, and gave him away when he attempted to work the devil game on English Charley."

"As I really did."

"I know it, as well as half a dozen other snaps since we have been out."

"Well, hasn't he been as mean as the devil to me all the while, notwithstanding all that I have done for him so that he might not lose his place? Besides, this last job was a mean one, and came very near disfiguring me for life. That more than counts against all I have ever done against him, doesn't it?"

"I should say it did."

"And he probably thinks it a devilish good joke."

"Yes; he laughs over it, and calls it the very best thing done."

"All right; he laughs best who laughs last."

Thus matters stood up to this time, and Tim was himself again.

They had gone to Charleston to show for a week, and the first night there Tim appeared for the first time since the accident which had obliged him to keep his mug in that poulitice.

But no one would have suspected for a moment that anything had ever happened to him of a serious nature, so well did he perform his part. Even the educated mule seemed pleased at seeing him again, and he and Tim made great sport for the audience.

On this occasion Tim appeared in the guise of a green Yankee boy, anxious to earn the reward of fifty dollars for riding the mule once around the ring, and as such characters create as much fun down South as "Cracker" would up North, he was received with shouts of laughter.

"How de du, Mr. Clown?" was his first salutation, as he entered the ring.

"Halloo, Yank! when did you come down?" asked Smith, imitating Tim's nasal twang.

"Come down yesterday; been all 'round looking for job, but can't find one."

"And so you came here for one?"

"Yes, sir-ee."

"Well, I guess you have got one that will pan out well—for the mule," said the clown, looking at the audience with a "mug."

"Waal, fetch on yer animile. If I can't keep on top of him, I'll ride on his belly, goldarned if I don't. I come here to win that half a hundred, an' I'm goin' to do it or bust!" said he, and the manner in which he delivered it brought down the house.

"Good boy! Here's your foster brother," replied Smith, leading up the mule.

"Warrant him sound?"

"Yes, sound and kind—for his kind; a child can drive him, as the jockeys say."

"All correct; I'm the child yer looking for. Whoa, Paregoric!" said Tim, taking hold of the bridle.

This created a loud laugh, during which Tim threw himself astride the mule.

"Now, then, Mr. Yank, if you ride him once around the ring, you shall receive the reward of fifty dollars," said the clown.

"G'lang, Paregoric!" yelled Tim.

And the mule obeyed orders by humping himself and throwing him about ten feet into the air, during which Tim managed to turn a couple of summersaults, and coming down again astride the mule, created a tremendous roar of laughter.

"What sort of a way is that to ride? Is that the way you do it up your way?"

"Oh, that's only a little funny business."

"I should say so."

"Whoa, now, Paregoric! What's the matter with ya? What ya gettin' yer back up for? I say, Mr. Clown, how many chances?"

"Oh, as many as you can stand."

"All correct. G'lang, Paregoric!"

This time the mule walked about half way around the ring, and then calmly proceeded to lie down and roll over, which, of course, produced a panic, during which Tim escaped, amid another roar.

The mule went back to the place from which he started, followed by Tim.

"Goldarn yer homely pacter! if you don't keep on yer legs, how be I to keep on yer back? Guess this ere mule never had much bringin' up," said he, to the clown.

"Oh, yes; he's highly educated."

"In deviltry, I guess. But I'm goin' to ride him 'round this ring or know the reason why," said he, again bestriding the animal.

This time the mule began to teter up and down as though in a canter, but in reality not going ahead one foot, and, of course, there was a great laugh.

Then Tim reached forward and pulled back one of his long ears, into which he appeared to whisper something pleasing to him, for he at once began to go ahead, and galloped around the ring in a jiffy, creating the wildest laughter and applause.

"Good boy!" said he, patting the mule on his neck.

"Ther next time I catch ya out, I'll treat ya to a peck

of oats. Waal, now, Mr. Clown, where's that fifty dollars?"

"Just step right back there into the tent, and Mr. Lent will give you the money."

"Oh, it's Lent money, hey?"

"Guess it's lost in this case."

"An' I guess it's won," replied Tim, starting for the dressing-tent, amid applause.

That was the first time he had appeared in this Yankee costume, and he succeeded in making a decided hit in it, greatly to the disgust of Smith, who never wanted anybody other than himself to raise a laugh when he was in the ring.

Extending the same offer to any other man who would ride the mule, two or three others came promptly forward and attempted it, only to meet with ignominious defeat and shouts of derisive laughter. This ended the mule business, and the other portions of the show followed as per programme.

On the whole, the show gave great satisfaction to the people, and the triumph of the Yankee boy was in every one's mouth, although many a laugh was let off at his expense, they never for a moment tumbling to the trick.

The mule was ridden with only a bridle and circingle, and the next night Tim harnessed him for the ring before going into the audience to play his part.

But during the day he had driven about a dozen leather-headed carpet tacks into the circingle, leaving their sharp points outward, so that after it was buckled on they stuck up with their heads resting on the mule's tough hide.

Smith was feeling very fine that night, and he had already made up his mind to play a trick on Tim, whom he regarded as "too fresh" in the business, and also too apt to get the most applause.

So when he had his little dialogue with the ring-master, and ordered out his "fiery, untamed steed," he at once flung himself astride of him for business.

And he instantly had all the business he could attend to, the first and most important of which was the letting forth of a wild yell and the sudden getting off of that mule's back.

At first the audience regarded it as a piece of funny business, but when they saw Smith rub himself smartly, and the look of surprise and disgust upon his face, they began to tumble to some sort of a trick that had been played upon him.

"What is the matter, Mr. Merryman?" asked the ring-master, approaching him.

An audible "cuss" greeted the audience, and they roared.

"What is the matter?"

"Somebody has been putting up a job on me?" he muttered, removing the circingle from the mule.

"A game of sharps and flats?"

"No, all sharps," said he, again getting upon the animal.

This time it was all right, although he was so sore that he could scarcely sit astride, on account of the severe pricking that he had received before.

However, he managed to go through with his act, as did Tim, but he was mad enough to fly.

"Score one for Tim," said the lad, as the mule business closed; and when the circingle was brought into the dressing-tent, all hands took a look at it, laughed, and suspected who had fixed it.

Smith, however, was not inclined to take the joke so pleasantly, and when he went into the tent he swore until the air looked positively blue and smelled sulphurous.

"Here's twenty cases for anybody who will tell me who fixed that circingle!" he yelled, flourishing a twenty-dollar bill.

"What's the matter now?" asked Mr. Lent, just then coming in.

Smith showed him the circingle.

"What do you think of that?"

"Well, I shouldn't care about sitting on that. Who did it?"

"That's just what I'd like to know, for I am ready to knock the stuffing out of the fellow, whoever he is," said he, savagely.

"But how about the jokes you play on people?"

"Me!"

"Yes. How about that snap on Tim?"

"What had I to do with that?"

"Well, what had he or anybody to do with this? The fact is, I am glad that you catch it once in a while, and if you all get the worst of it, I shall be glad, for then it will put a stop to this nonsensical business of practical joking."

"But do you uphold this, sir?"

"No; but notwithstanding that, you all engage in it, and there is some trouble always on foot."

This was all the satisfaction or consolation Smith got from his employer, and when he attempted to push his inquiries further for the purpose of finding out who had put up the job on him, he only got laughed at for his pains.

But you can bet your boots that he never got on to that mule afterwards without first feeling of the circingle, and he had to endure the laugh which greeted him from every member of the company, although he felt certain that Tim was the joker.

The next day the community was startled and shocked by the report of a most brutal murder that had been committed, and open threats of lynching were made on all sides should the culprit fall into the hands of the law.

Officers were out in all directions trying to get upon the track of the murderer, and excitement ran very high.

Tim got hold of a happy thought. He wasn't half through with Mr. Clown yet, and after conceiving a plan of action, he consulted with Robert Stickney.

"Now this is how we can work it on him," said Tim; "officers are out in all directions looking for the

murderer, and to-night after the show is over we will dress up a few of the supes as officers, and have them arrest him as the murderer."

"That's so, cully, and I can scare him half to death by telling him that the people will surely lynch him without judge or jury, and that the only hope he has is to fly and put himself in the hands of the mayor until the excitement subsides," said Stickney.

"All right, you work that part and I'll fix the rest of the business. Let's have it all ready to send off just as he comes out of the ring the last time."

"Yes, for by that time I shall be dressed."

Tim at once set himself to work on the details of the affair, and by night he had everything in readiness for the joke.

Bob Stickney in the meantime was working Smith up relative to the murder.

"Oh, they'll lynch him the moment he is arrested," said he.

"But suppose they don't catch him?" suggested Smith.

"Well, I am sure they would hang almost anybody who fell into their hands even on the barest suspicion. The people want blood, and ten to one they will hang an innocent person after all, so blind are they in their rage."

"That's so; I would not like to be even suspected," said Smith, thoughtfully.

"Neither would I."

In this way his mind was prepared for what was to follow.

True enough there did exist great excitement among the people, and most likely they would have lynched the fiend without loss of time could they have caught him.

Strangely enough the affair made a deep impression upon Smith's mind, and he was continually on the look-out for the result, expecting to hear of somebody's being lynched.

That night, after he had just come from the ring in the last act, four men made their way into the dressing-tent, each one heavily armed.

"Where is Smith, the clown?" demanded one of them. "We want him."

"What for?" asked somebody, and Smith, overhearing it, was listening with all his ears.

"We want him for the murder of Alice Sheridan, and have good reason for suspecting that we have the right man."

Bob Stickney stole into Smith's dressing-room.

"Did you hear that, Bill?" he asked, in a hurried whisper, at the same time acting so well that he looked positively frightened.

"Y—yes, what is it?" asked Smith, tremblingly.

"For some reason or other you are suspected of committing that murder."

"But of course I can prove differently."

"Of course you can, but that is not the point now. You must not fall into the hands of the police in this present stage of excitement, or you will be hung to the nearest lamp-post, guilty or not guilty."

"But what am I to do?"

"Skip out before they see you, and run with all the legs you have got, and put yourself in the hands of the mayor, and claim his protection until such time as we can prove your innocence. Skip!"

"But I haven't dressed yet," moaned Smith, pale with fear.

"Never mind that. Better save your life in a clown's dress than to be hung in it. Go at once or they will be in here," he added, as he heard the bogus officers talking loudly outside.

"You'll come after me?"

"Yes, of course we will. Hurry up, and make good use of your legs."

"Where is he?" demanded the officer, loudly, and at the same time there was a quick movement without.

Smith waited to hear no more, but diving down under the edge of the tent, he shot out into the darkness.

Stickney gave the alarm, and told them which way to go in order to get near him.

"Come on, fellows!" cried Tim.

"Stop him, stop him!" yelled the officers, dashing after him.

"There he goes! There goes the murderer! Stop him! Lynch him!" and a dozen of other cries fell upon his ears as he sped onward like a frightened deer.

Seeing the chase and suspecting some fun, several other members of the company joined in it, as did about a dozen vagrant dogs who had nothing better to do.

Finding his way to the city cut off, Smith turned and ran out toward the country, closely followed by the mob, uttering all sorts of wild yells and demanding his blood.

This was too much for Smith, and utterly overcome with fatigue and fright, he fainted and fell down upon the grass, seeing which the conspirators turned and ran back to the tent again.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AFTER lying there on the grass for a few moments Smith revived, and found the dogs smelling of him. But there was not a human being in sight.

What the mischief did it mean, anyway? Where was he, and what had happened?

He remembered the visit of the officers to the dressing tent to arrest him on the suspicion of having committed the murder that was creating so much excitement in Charleston at the time, and he also remembered having escaped from them for the purpose of claiming the protection of the mayor until he could prove that he was in no way connected with it.

But the last thing he remembered was when they were pursuing him, and all at once he fainted and sank down upon the grass.

Where were those pursuers now?

The dogs alone remained.

Struggling to his feet, he kicked two or three of them away, and began to look around him.

The dogs returned and appeared determined on sampling his meat.

"Get out, you vags, get out!" he cried, at the same time placing his toemark upon another one of them.

"What the devil does this mean, anyway? Have I escaped them, or what has happened? Let me see? This is the way I came, I'll return and take off my clown dress, and if they hang me for something I am not guilty of, it shall not be in my business suit; no,

"Yes."

"I congratulate you, for if they had caught you, it would have gone very hard with you, and we should most likely have been without a clown by this time," said he.

"Bob, that was a very good racket," said Smith, looking at him soberly.

"Yes, I should say it was, although I wouldn't care to be in the snap myself."

"Oh, you be hanged!"

"No, thank you, I don't care to be hanged, and I don't care to come so near to it as you did just now, either."

"That's all right, Bob."

"Well, I'm glad that it is, but I must say that it looked bad for you a few moments ago."

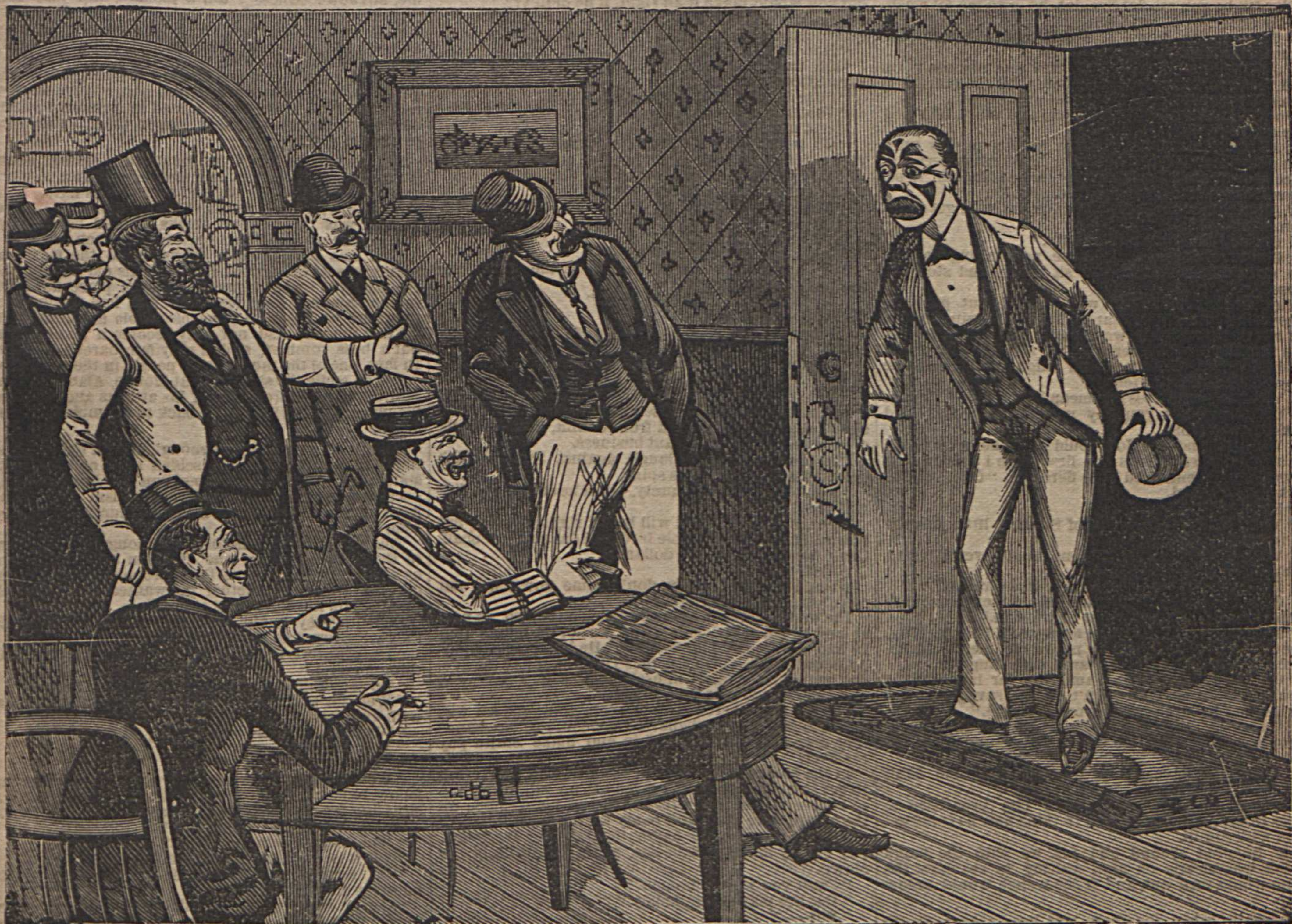
"Oh, we are, eh?"

"I think so. Well, come along, and I'll blow you off. I own up that it was the best thing ever played on me. Come," said he, having by this time finished dressing.

And you bet that the gang followed him, and drank and smoked deeply at his expense, all the while chaffing him about the affair which had caused so much fun, and made him feel so sheepish.

Tim, boy though he was, was the king pin of the crowd, for they all knew that he had put up the job, and made all the fun out of the thing, and from that hour he was a greater favorite than ever.

But nothing happened worth recording from that time until they arrived at Savannah, Georgia. But by that time Smith had fully made up his mind that Tim



"What's the matter, Tim?" asked English Charley, the first to speak. "That's what I would like to know," said he, in a despairing tone of voice.

"I'll not allow the profession to be disgraced. Get out, I tell you!" he added, as he gave another one of the dogs a sample of his kicking powers.

Cautiously he made his way back to the tents again.

The show was over, and the people had forsaken the place. The performers had all dressed, and those not in the racket had gone to their hotels; but Tim and about a dozen others were waiting around, evidently to see how the thing would end.

Tim was the first one to welcome him.

"Why, where the devil have you been, Smithy, old man?" was his earnest inquiry.

Smith took a good square look at him.

"Halloo, Smithy, what is the matter with you?" asked English Charley.

"Why?"

"Why! Have you got 'em again?"

"Got 'em! Got what?" asked Smith.

"Jims."

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Matter! Well, I should smile if I didn't ask it. What made you run away so like the devil with your dogs on?"

"Oh, only wanted a little exercise, that's all. Why?"

"Why! why, you ran as though the very devil was after you."

"Yes; I always do when I want to limber up," replied Smith, for he began to suspect that there had been a trick played upon him.

"But whoever knew you to limber up just after your business in the ring, and with all your dogs on?"

"Well, I felt frisky."

"Yes, you acted as though you did."

Smith proceeded to dress himself, while the gang gathered around to quiz him.

Among the others, Bob Stickney, who had given him the send off, approached.

"Did you succeed in getting away from them, Bill?" he asked.

"Oh, you go to the devil."

"What for?"

"It was a job."

"What was?"

"That racket."

"I don't understand you."

"Where are those officers?"

"Hang me if I know. You must have given them the slip."

"Bob, that was pretty good," said he, laughing heartily.

"Well, I admire your taste if you call that pretty good, that is, unless you refer to your luck in getting away from them."

"Oh, I own up. I'll blow you all off when we get back to the hotel, but I must say that it was the worst racket that was ever played on me. Who put it up?"

"I don't understand you."

"That's all right. I suppose you all had a hand in it, and so I'll wet you all down. But I'd give a ten case note to know who put the thing up," said he, at which there was a loud and hearty laugh.

"Hurry up, Bill, we're awfully dry."

"Oh, no doubt."

"Did you see him go?" asked Tim.

"Beat the best horse we have got in the circus," said English Charley.

"Ten feet at every bound," and again they laughed.

"The idea of being chased for a murderer," said Tim.

"Yes, and I'll bet a fiver that you put up the racket, Tim," said Smith.

"Me?"

"Yes, you."

"I never put up jobs."

"Oh, no."

"I never mix paint that won't wash off. No—no."

"All right, that settles it. We are square now, Tim."

was the one who had worked the murder racket on him, and which made him the laughing stock of the whole company. And by that time he had decided how he would turn the tables and the laugh upon him.

The idea of having a boy play all these tricks on him, an old showman, and of course supposed to be up in all sorts of games, was too much. It was disgraceful and not to be borne. Tim must be humbled and taught to know his place, and he was just the man to do the business for him, or if not, he could get somebody to help him.

But he had had experience enough to know better than to take anybody into his confidence, for he invariably got left when he did so. Therefore he kept his own secret and got his job ready to mark the third night of their stay in Savannah.

In order to carry it out he had to get the confidence of an old colored washerwoman whom he had known there the year before, and arranged it with her to the effect that if she did not get five dollars out of Tim for an imaginary wash bill, he would pay her a like sum for trying to do so, provided she followed his instructions.

He had learned Tim's business well enough by this time to know that on this particular night he would ride the mule around the track, after a little funny business, and then claim the fifty dollars reward for doing so.

This was the point that Smith was working up, and knowing that every member of the company would be present, he did not issue any special invitation for them to be on hand to see the fun, as he had done on previous occasions, and simply waited for the thing to develop itself, although they all noticed that he sported a big grin.

But sure enough everything worked just as he expected, and after making a heap of fun for the audience while attempting to ride the mule around the track (on this occasion being dressed as a smart young fel

low from the country). Tim finally succeeded in doing so, greatly to the delight of the people, who evidently sided with him.

"I'll take that fifty," said he, dismounting and bowing to the audience.

"All right," replied Smith.

"An' I take dat five dollar dat you owe me fo' dat washin' las' yeah!" shouted the negro washerwoman, rising up and making a great display.

Of course the audience roared at such a sensational hurrah, while Tim got as red as a rooster's comb.

"Well, sir, how is this?" asked the clown. "Don't you pay your wash bills?"

"No, he don't. He cheat me out ob five dollar dat he owed me mo' dan a yeah," cried the wench.

"Now is your time to get it, madame."

"Dat am so, honey. Don' you pay him dat fifty dollar 'til he gub me dat five dat he owe me fo' washin' his clus."

"Better come down here and collar him," said Smith, laughing.

"Jus' hol' on ter him, boss, 'til I gets my hooks on him," she yelled, and at the same time she started to work her way through the crowd around her.

Poor Tim was nearly paralyzed, and stood blushing like a girl.

"All right, aunty, he will not get his money until you get yours. Keep your seat until after the performance is over, and then come around and find Mr. Lent. He will see justice done you," said Smith.

"All right, honey, but don't you luf him get away from me."

"Oh, no! that's all right, aunty."

"Can't fool dis chile," said she, now taking heed of the cries all around her to sit down and stop her noise.

Tim hardly knew which way to move, but partially recovering himself, he started for the dressing-tent to get out of sight, but it was simply out of the frying-pan into the fire, for every one of the company stood ready to give him the grand laugh the moment he showed himself in the tent.

"What the devil does she mean?" he asked, finally.

"Oh, why don't you pay your wash bills?" said Stickney, laughing.

"Wash—thunder! How could I owe her a wash bill for a year when this is the first time I was ever in Savannah?" demanded Tim, fiercely. "Oh, I see the racket," he added.

"Racket?"

"Yes, racket. This is one of Smith's little jobs put up to get the laugh on me."

"Well, it was a very good one, at all events," said Stickney.

"I don't say it isn't, but I know it is a racket."

"Perhaps so, and that makes him somewhat square with that murder business at Charleston."

"All right; but I'll fix him for it, see if I don't. Why, I never was so ashamed in my whole life," said he, while the entire company roared with laughter.

"Oh, it's good; I don't blame you for laughing. I would laugh if the joke wasn't on me savagely. But I'll bet that he hired her to work it on me."

"I dare say, and most likely she will follow it up by coming around after the show is over, and going for you again."

"Well, she'll have a good time doing it, and don't you make any error."

On went the performance, and Tim proceeded to dress in his regular suit, and to think how he could get even with Smith.

He lingered around and put up with the laugh which was clearly on him, waiting to see how the thing would turn out, and if the wench would follow it up.

Presently, when the show was nearly over, Smith finished his funny business in the ring, and came out into the dressing tent to get in his share of the laugh.

"Oh, that's all right, Smithy; I see the point, and don't kick for a cent," said Tim.

"You don't! Well, the wench is kicking for five hundred cents."

"And you put her up to it."

"Me!"

"Yes, of course. Who else?"

"Why, perhaps she made a mistake."

"No, Tim made the mistake," said Stickney.

"And so does he if he thinks it will work," said Tim.

"Why, you little fool, I had nothing to do with it. What's the matter with you?"

"That's all right. That's one point for you. You wait until you see my point."

Smith laughed, and went to his dressing-room to resume his clothes, where, meeting with other members of the company who had already enjoyed their laugh over the affair, he renewed his most heartily.

"That was a good snap, Smithy," said they, commenting on the matter.

"Oh, but just wait until the show is over," said he.

"Why?"

"Because you will see more fun."

"How?"

"She is coming around here to go for him some more."

Tim overheard this, and at once made up his mind to be out of sight when the remainder of the racket was worked.

Smith was full of fun and enthusiasm, and unable to contain himself, he told all hands about it and asked them to wait after the show was over and see the wench bluff five dollars out of Tim.

Well, the performance was soon over and the crowd filed out of the circus tent into the one where the animals were, thus setting English Charley's chin to working, grinding out the most improbable "taffy" that was ever fed to a gaping public.

But the old wench had no desire to see the animals. She was working for her five dollars, and just as soon

as she could get out of the crowd, she came around to the dressing tent, as directed by Smith.

"Whar am dat precious lamb dat owe me dem five dollars?" was her first inquiry.

Smith and his friends were just coming out of the dressing-room. He looked around expecting to see Tim, but that individual was not in sight.

"He is here somewhere, aunty," said he.

"But I wants ter see dat five dollars!" said she, savagely.

"Oh, he'll pay it, if we can only find him; I say, where's Tim?" he called.

Nobody appeared to know, but Tim was where he could both see and hear without being seen himself.

"Don' want no foolin', boss," said she.

"Oh, that's all right, aunty."

"Ob c'us' it am all right, honey, fo' didn't you say dat you would make it all right, if he didn't?"

This raised a laugh at Smith's expense, and he began to feel as though he had been stealing sheep.

"How is that, Bill?" asked Stickney.

"Oh, that's all right. Where's Tim?" said he, looking anxiously about.

"Gone home," said George, the vaulter.

"Thunder! When?"

"Just now."

"Oh, pshaw! That spoils the racket," said Smith, with evident disgust.

"Why didn't you keep him?"

"I thought he'd be sure to stay."

"Whar am dat chap, boss?" asked the wench, becoming anxious.

"Oh, he'll show up soon."

"Don't fool wid me, honey."

"Of course not," replied Smith, at the same time beginning to look sick.

"Don't want no nonsense, boss."

"Why, of course not."

"Whar am dat chap? I wants my five dollars fo' shuah!"

"Wait a moment," and he started as though to find Tim.

"Hole on dar, boss! Yer can't fool me dat way; I want dat five dollars, or else I'll be liable ter get coltish," said she, placing herself in front of him, and showing conclusively that she meant business.

This awoke another laugh against Smith, which chilled the marrow in his spine.

"Don't be in a hurry, aunty," said he coaxingly. "It will be all right."

"Yes, if I luf you go it will be all right fo' you, but you don't cotch dis yer ole bird wid dat sort of chaff. Come down wid dat five dollar!"

"Well, but—"

"Yes, I will 'but' if you don't come down wid dat cash," said she savagely.

The tables were completely turned on Smith, as usual, and he felt sick. This was a part of the game that he had not prepared himself for. He hadn't the slightest doubt in the world but that Tim would pay the five, and being very miserly himself, it was like pulling a tooth for him to give up a dollar.

The crowd gathered around, seeing how the cat was about to jump, and whenever they could get a chance they urged the wench to sail in and make Smith pay the five.

In the meantime he was all anxiety, and was trying to get somebody to go in search of Tim, still unwilling to believe that he had returned to the hotel, since all the others were there and ready for the sport.

"I don't want no mo' foolin' 'bout dat yer five dollar. Pay me my money!" said she, again confronting the clown.

"Can't you wait a moment?"

"Dat am played out, honey."

"But—"

And she *did* "but." Lowering her head like an overgrown billy-goat, she went for Smith, striking him in the bread-basket and knocking him end over end, completely out of time.

"Pay me dat five!" she demanded, following him up.

"Yes—yes, here it is," he moaned, as he struggled almost breathless to his feet.

"Come down wid dat cash!"

"Here it is," said he, straightening himself up and producing the money, while a most sickly smile overspread his features.

"Dat's all right, honey. Don't never try fo' ter fool a poo' lone woman, fo' de Lord am allus on de side ob de mudderless," said she, taking the money and lighting out.

Such a shout as followed this was never heard before, during which Tim came from his hiding-place and joined in it.

If Smith had been sick before, what was he now? He wanted to die.

"Well, old man, how do you feel now?" asked Tim, laughing.

"Oh, go to thunder!" said he, turning away. But the gang stuck to him, and it cost him at least ten dollars more to quiet the laugh raised against him.

CHAPTER XIX.

A SICKER man than was Smith, the clown, could never have existed.

The racket which he played on Tim with so much success had rebounded like a boomerang, and finally made him not only the victim, but the laughing stock again for the whole company.

It cost him from ten to twenty dollars that night to make good for all the laughter which came up on the joke he had started on Tumbling Tim, and which fell back on him.

Even Mr. Lent came in, having heard of the affair, and after congratulating Smith in laughing mockery,

he said that he could content himself with a bottle of wine, and after drinking it, he asked him how he liked practical joking, anyway.

Smith got red in the face, and made some reply which his friends could not understand, and soon after worked up an excuse for going to bed.

But how the gang did laugh and tell over the story after he had retired! In fact, they almost made a night of it, and laughed until they were sore around the ribs.

But how about Smith?

On reaching his room, he began to hunt around for something with which to club himself.

"I want to kill myself, for I am the biggest fool that ever lived; I will never attempt to play a joke on anybody again so long as I live, for somehow or other, I always get the worst of it. What is the matter with me, anyhow? Guess I am a jackass, and that confounded little Tim—why, somehow or other he always comes out on top. Confound him, anyhow! He's too much for me, and from this time forth I will never try to work anything on him."

Thus he mused, and finally went to sleep; but he did not know himself when he swore never to try another racket on Tim, for he so delighted in practical joking that he could not withhold longer than a good idea presented itself.

But to tell the truth, he didn't care enough about it for some time to hunt very deep for an idea to work another practical joke on, and as Tim was naturally a quiet fellow, if other people let him alone, the consequence was that several weeks elapsed before anything came up again that occasioned much fun.

This was partially due, however, to the fact that Smith was down a great deal with his old enemy, the rheumatism, and Tim had to take his place as clown in the sawdust ring; for when Tim had business of that kind on hand he gave his whole attention to it. By this time he had not only become a good clown, but a boss tumbler, and a very fair bareback rider. In fact, one of the most useful people in the company.

It was while the show was at Mobile, Alabama, that Smith recovered from one of his attacks and resumed his place, leaving Tim to go back to his mule business again.

Now, it of course is well enough known by this time that Bill Smith was a very selfish man, and notwithstanding Tim had kept his position for him on many occasions when he had the rheumatism and would have otherwise lost it, he never so much as thanked him.

This finally became notorious among the members of the company, every one of whom regarded Smith as a hog, and so some of them proposed to make him do the fair thing whether he wanted to or not, although Tim knew nothing about it.

Bob Stickney finally said to him one night while they were dressing for the show:

"I say, Smith, I should think you would do something for Tim."

"Do something! what, kill him?" asked Smith.

"Well, for that matter, I don't think you'll kill him with kindness."

"What the devil are you driving at?"

"You don't tumble?"

"Nary once."

"Well, I think I should know what to do if some fellow took my place night after night and saved a situation for me when I was sick."

"Bah! Lent pays him extra."

"Well, that is nothing to you."

"Yes it is; he takes it out of my salary."

"Oh, he does, eh?" asked Stickney, all the while knowing that he lied.

"Cert. Why, confound him, he is saving more money than I am, and the idea of giving him a present!"

"All right, but I would give him something to show appreciation. A watch and chain, for instance."

"A watch and chain!" exclaimed Smith, and then he laughed loudly.

"That would be me."

"Well, it won't be me. He gets well enough paid for what he does."

"All right if you think so," replied Stickney, and the matter dropped, although he afterwards reported to other members of the company the conversation.

"Boys, I've got an idea," said English Charley, after hearing about Smith's meanness in the matter.

"What is it?" asked one or two.

"Never mind, now. Let me see if he will cotton to it first. I will strike him to-morrow."

This being settled, nothing more was said about it at that time, but the next day while he and Smith were sampling some lemonade at the hotel bar, he spoke of it in this way:

"I say, Charley, I'll tell you of a good thing. Bob Stickney says he thinks I ought to make Tim a present of a watch and chain for what he has done for me when I was sick."

"You don't say so!"

"Fact."

"Well, Bob has got a gall. Wonder if he would do so if he was in your place?" asked Charley, contemptuously, and seeming to side with Smith.

"He says he would."

"Bah! But, Smithy, do you know I could tell you of a good snap?"

"No. What is it?" he asked, eagerly.

"Now nothing in the world would tickle Tim like having somebody present him with a watch and chain."

"Oh, undoubtedly."

"Hold on until you hear me. Now you can buy a cheap brass watch and chain for three or four dollars that will look all right for a few days. Present him that, and I'll bet you anything he will give us a big supper. See the point?"

"Yes! A devilish good joke. Now I'll just work that racket, Charley," replied Smith, with much enthusiasm.

"There'll be fun in it."

"You bet; don't say a word and I'll work it. I'll tell Bob that I have concluded to take his advice. That's all right. Much obliged. See how I'll work it."

"Make a neat job of it and it will pan out rich."

"Of course I'll make a neat job of it. That's all right, just wait and see how I'll work it."

Yes, Charley would wait.

He waited until he got the boys together, and then set them into the snap.

"Now, Tim, I'll tell you how we will work it," he added, and directly the two jokers had their heads to-

somely for the boys—yes, and for the ladies, too, for that matter."

"Certainly."

Smith chuckled and smacked his lips. What a pudding there was in store for him, and what a grand and expensive laugh he would have on his old tormentor!

"Tim," said he, that night after the show was over, "come up to my room to-morrow about noon, for I have got a little trinket that I am going to present you with, in the presence of the company."

"Is that so?" said Tim, pretending to be greatly surprised.

"Yes; you have been very good to me when I have been laid up, and I would like to present you with a little token of my regard and appreciation."

the noble way in which you have always taken my place in the ring when I have been disabled by sickness;" here he held up a small paper box containing a watch and chain, although he did not expose it fully in view: "trusting you may ever wear it with as much pleasure as I present it to you, allow me to place it in your possession," saying which he handed the box to Tim across the table.

Tim glanced at it and said in reply:

"Mr. Smith and friends: I can hardly find fitting words with which to reply to you for this present; I never wished before that I was an orator such as Smith is; I never felt so utterly dead broke around my chin before in my life; I have been on tick a great deal during my life, but this is the first time I ever owned a ticker; I have had many a good time, but this is my



"There he goes! There goes the murderer! Stop him! Lynch him!" and a dozen other cries fell upon his ears as he sped onward like a deer.

gether, and it was all arranged to carry out Charley's idea.

And Smith said to Stickney the next evening, when they were dressing:

"I have been thinking that matter over, and have come to the conclusion that you are right regarding Tim."

"Of course I am," replied Stickney, at the same time knowing all about it.

"Yes, and so I have bought a nice little gold watch and chain, which I am going to present to him to-morrow."

"Well, that is good of you; how much did it cost you?"

"Oh, about a hundred."

"That's the proper caper."

"And I suppose Tim will set 'em up for the gang, won't he?"

"Oh, certainly; nothing mean about him. He'll do the right thing, be assured."

"That's all right. I wouldn't have you say anything to him on that part of the subject, but I will make the presentation in my room, and have a table there large enough for a spread, as a sort of a hint as to what he will be expected to do."

"Yes, that will do, but of course, being a boy, he won't know exactly what to do, and some of us old jokers will have to take the lead, although he will gladly pay the bills."

"Oh, I'll attend to that, never fear. I know how that part of the business is conducted, every time. All I ask him to do is to pay the bills."

"Certainly; and, mind you, I think that if he paid as much for the entertainment as you paid for the watch, that it would be no more than fair, for it is not the intrinsic value of the gift so much as the sentiment accompanying it."

"You are right, Bob, and on that account, and seeing that Tim has plenty of money, it would only be the bon-ton proper caper for him to set them up hand-

"Well, really, Mr. Smith, I hardly think I deserve it, but if you think I do, I shall certainly prize it very highly."

Tim was putting in some good acting.

"Of course you will. You can have a nice little speech ready in reply, for it is always expected in such cases."

"All right; I'll think up something. Much obliged for the hint."

"Well, of course you are young and never had a present before like the one I am going to make you, and it is my duty to post you so that you may not appear foolish before the company."

"You are bang up kind, Mr. Smith. All hands going to be there?"

"Yes, everybody; Mr. Lent as well."

"I'll do my best not to appear green."

"Oh, I guess you'll do it well enough."

And this settled that part of the business.

The next was to invite the entire company, including the heads of the various gangs connected with the circus and menagerie to be present on the occasion, and hint also that a feed would undoubtedly follow the presentation.

To a few of his particular friends, however, he told the secret regarding the affair, so that they might be ready to enjoy the fun and the laugh which would be sure to follow in a few days, just as soon as the real character of the gift became known, as it surely would.

Well, the next day about fifty people assembled at Smith's room to take part in the presentation and what was to follow.

Tim was waiting outside, and when everything was in readiness, some one went and brought him in, blushing.

"Order, please!" cried Smith, rising up at one end of the table. "Tim, I have sent for you on this occasion that I might present you, in the presence of our mutual friends, with a slight token of my respect for

first time-piece; I have never known what it is to have an 'uncle,' because I never had a ticker to establish our relation; I have never yet visited that celebrated watering-place, known as 'the spout,' for the same reason. Mr. Smith, I trust you will never have the rheumatism again, but if you ever should you may depend upon my humble services in curing the audience if I cannot cure you. But I suspect that this act of generosity on your part will effect a permanent cure."

Here there was laughter and applause from the knowing ones.

"Once more allow me to thank you, Mr. Smith, and although not knowing exactly what is expected of me on such an occasion as this, I would respectfully ask you to call for whatever you may want yourself or that you suspect our friends might want to finish off the business with," saying which he gracefully retired.

"Good boy! Why, you are really eloquent, especially so in the closing part of your little speech; knowing how such affairs should terminate, I will take the responsibility of ordering a few things that will probably fill the bill. Send up the landlord," he called. That worthy soon put in an appearance, and Smith ordered a repast of cold fowl, wines, liquors and cigars; in fact, a boss, bang-up lunch.

And then all hands were invited to walk up, sit up, and brace up, a thing they were not slow to do, any more than Smith was in setting the example.

He was not long in getting pretty full of the best brandy, and seated at the head of the table, he bossed the whole affair and felt so good that he could almost fly. Again and again he ordered, and the best the house afforded was none too good, and whenever Tim got a chance, he encouraged him to order whatever he wanted.

Then one by one the company began to drop out, a thing that Smith was hardly sorry for, since it would leave him in full possession. He sang songs, made little funny speeches, in which the conspirators encour-

aged him, until he got as full as a goat, and failed to notice that all but two or three of them had vanished on one excuse or another.

Finally, in attempting to tell a story that he had already told three or four times, he fell asleep in his chair, and the last one of the company stole softly out of the room, leaving him entirely alone in his glory and his snooze.

He never told his dreams, if he had any, and so we are wholly in the dark regarding that portion of the entertainment over which he presided, but after sleeping there about two hours, he gradually came to himself and looked slowly around.

He was all alone. How long had he slept, and what had become of the others?

There stood the empty bottles, and the dismantled plates.

"Wonder if I made a fool of myself?" he mused; and then he felt in his coat pocket for his handkerchief. He drew out a handful of chicken bones which Tim had slyly placed there.

If that did not convince him that he had made a fool of himself, when he felt in his other pocket and found it half full of greasy sardines and oil, he certainly concluded that he either had, or that somebody had made a fool of him.

"I wonder what the devil this all means, anyway?" he muttered. "I must have got awfully drunk, and some of those fellows have played this on me," and just then he felt something down his neck behind, and on feeling for it, he pulled the leg bone of a turkey out from between his coat and vest.

"Confound those fellows, they have made a nice mess of me. I'll bet that Tim was at the bottom of it, confound him. Wonder if he has tumbled to the racket?" and he got up and looked around.

It was five o'clock, and at the least calculation he had slept two hours, and these tricks must have been played while he was asleep.

Just then there was a rap on his door.

"Come in!" he growled.

The door opened and the landlord strode in, having a piece of paper in his hand.

"Ah, Mr. Smith, all through, eh?" he asked, looking around on the wreck.

"Through! Well, it looks that way. Where are the rest of them?"

"Oh, they have been gone some time. I found you asleep and thought I wouldn't disturb you."

"Disturb me! What for?"

"With the amount of your bill."

"Bill! My bill! Why, I owe you no bill," said Smith, opening his eyes.

"Why, certainly you do. You ordered everything that came up here, and the bill amounts to one hundred and ten dollars."

"Well, but Tim will pay that."

"Oh, no, he won't. I look only to you who did the ordering. Besides, when people play practical jokes, they must expect to pay the forfeit," he added.

"What the devil do you mean?" asked Smith, beginning to feel sick.

"Why, about the watch, to be sure."

"What about it?"

"Why, the joke," said he, laughing.

"Oh, go to the devil!"

"Well, I may make a trip to the domains of his majesty, but I want to collect this bill before I go."

"But you won't collect it of me."

"Yes, I shall, or I shall arrest you."

"What! Do you mean it?" he asked, after looking at him a moment in surprise.

"I certainly do."

"But it is all on Tim's account."

"I understand all about it. They have all been down in the bar-room talking the matter over and showing the watch."

"The devil you say!"

"Yes, sir, and I must say that it is a good joke all around."

"Joke!" exclaimed Smith, wildly.

"That's what I call it. But here is the bill for the second best part of it."

Poor Smith! Sold again! But there was no help for it. According to the law, he would have to pay or go to jail, and reluctantly he came down with the sugar, although it was like pulling teeth. And then he went to the show.

Here a regular grand laugh awaited him, and again he promised never to attempt another practical joke as long as he lived.

He was so "sick" that it made him humpbacked.

CHAPTER XX.

THE snap of presenting Tumbling Tim with a watch and chain by Smith, the clown, and the feast which followed, and of his having to pay for it, will be remembered.

And it will also be remembered how sick it made him, for it seemed that every practical joke he attempted to play on anybody else was certain to go back on him, and that he invariably got the worst of it, as he had in this instance.

It was their first night in Mobile, and when he reached the dressing tent, he found that the whole company had arrived there before him, and his appearance was greeted with a loud, continuous laugh.

But he had already made up his mind not to notice it. He was sick enough already without having anything further to do with that party, although he would have given all he possessed in the world to know who had been instrumental in playing him.

"Halloo, Smithy, old man, how do you feel after your feed?" asked Mr. Lent, at which the others gathered around, grinning.

"Bah!" was his only reply.

"Well, I should think that you would feel sheepish enough to 'bah!' anyhow," said he. "How do you like practical joking, anyhow?"

Smith refused to reply.

"Nice time we had, Smithy," said English Charley.

"That was an elegant watch," put in Tumbling Tim.

"But the feed laid over the deck," said Bob Stickney, laughing.

"Oh, you go to the devil, all of you!" growled Smith, turning away, and refusing to be chaffed any further.

"It serves you right, Smith, and I am glad of it," said Mr. Lent, "for you are always putting up jobs on somebody, and I am glad that you occasionally get the worst of it."

But Smith had nothing to say. He went right on dressing for the ring, and paid not the slightest attention to what was said.

He could not help hearing the laughs and jokes that were let off at his expense, however; and although he at first felt sick, yet he gradually got warmed up, and wanted to fight the whole company, singly or collectively—in fact, anything that suited them best. Tim displayed his watch, and the others asked him what time it was, and where he got his watch.

"This is the watch that Mr. Smith gave me, don't you know?" said he.

"Oh, yes, so it is. Nice watch, isn't it?"

"You bet. Smithy don't do things by halves when he gives a fellow a thing, you can bet on it," replied Tim; and Smith thought of something he would like to give him, feeling positive that he wouldn't do it by halves.

"What time is it, Tim?" asked Stickney.

"I don't know. She doesn't go quite so fast as other clocks do. Ain't regulated yet, I suppose. But she's a good 'un to guess by, though, that is, after you find out how much she loses in a day."

"I heard about that presentation," said one of the canvassmen, addressing Tim, after the chat had been going on awhile.

"Oh, yes, Bill, you ought to have been there. Gave us all a royal lay out. All you wanted to eat and drink."

"You don't tell me so?"

"Fact. Nothing mean about Smith."

"Unless it is his feelings about now," suggested Stickney, at which there was another laugh.

It was almost too much for human nature to bear, but Smith had to do it, fearing that if he opened his mouth that he would again put his foot into it; but, oh, how mad he was!

There was no let up for him during the next week. Twice he got mad enough to fight, and both times he got flogged himself and laughed at more than ever.

The only way is to let such things have their run until they play themselves out, for if you get mad and attempt to resent them, you always get the worst of it and keep them alive all the longer.

Well, nothing of any remarkable interest occurred that is worth writing about until the company found themselves at New Orleans, where they were billed for a week, at the St. Charles Theater.

Meantime the watch racket had nearly died out and become forgotten, and Smith was once more comparatively happy. But he swore off on practical joking. He had had a belly full of that sort of business.

And on this account there was but little of the business done in the company, anyhow, for he had always been the ringleader at it until his late "sickness."

But there was always fun enough going on to satisfy everybody, especially Tim, who had never traveled before, and as the reader knows, he was never slow in taking advantage of it.

Although New Orleans is the metropolis of the South, and is generally well supplied with amusements of all sorts, yet they ever welcome a circus with open arms.

Especially is this the case with the colored population. It is generally supposed that a darkey regards a watermelon higher than almost any earthly thing, but a circus stands first with them always. Beg, borrow, or steal, they are bound to get into the circus.

This peculiarity, however, is not wholly with New Orleans darkeys, for it is the same everywhere, North or South, for that matter, and a great portion of Tim's fun was extracted from them.

As usual, the trick mule created a decided sensation in New Orleans among the darkeys, all of whom are supposed to know all about that animal with the long hearers; and when it became known that a reward of fifty dollars was to be given to anybody who would ride that mule once around the ring, the "darks" of New Orleans were wild.

The only question was how many nights they were going to play, and how many chances there would be for the ambitious darkeys who wished to take chances with that mule.

Tim didn't have much to do that week in New Orleans, for every night there were at least a dozen candidates for the honors and reward.

"Hole on dar, honey! I's gwine fo' ter gobble dat fifty!" said one of them, as they stood around the ticket wagon waiting for the doors to open.

"Who you, anyway?" cries another. "You ride dat mule? He broke you all up in de fus' inning."

"Go 'way, nigger! What you know 'bout mules, anyway?" is the retort.

"Know more'n you do. Who you, anyway?"

"I's Abraham Lincoln Johnson. Who you?" came back the indignant reply.

"Don't car' who you be; you no good on mules, anyway."

"I show you I do."

"When?"

"To-night."

"Go 'way, nig, you no good."

"Bet you a million dollars dat I am good."

"Hole on! go yer small change fast."

"Got all der money I want, honey."

"Oh, you go shoot yourself. I know what I know." And so the thing went, and was kept up in one way or another every day.

On the third day, however, there was fun. About a dozen ambitious coons congregated for the express purpose of catching that fifty dollars.

One of them was especially noticeable. He was a good-looking "buck," about twenty-five years of age, and hanging to his arm was a wench who could have passed muster almost anywhere for good looks.

But there was an absence of jewelry and the usual amount of gewgaws, which was quite remarkable.

"Pauline," said her escort, "you been wantin' me fo' ter marry you fo' some time now."

"Yes, Moses," she lisped.

"Pauline, I'se gwine fo' ter marry you dis bery night."

"Am dat so, Moses?"

"It am."

"But de money?"

"I fix dat all right, Pauline. I's gwine fo' ter take you to de circus."

"Moses, yer don't say so!"

"Yas, Pauline."

"How?"

"Hush!"

"Yes."

"Dat educated mule!"

"Yes."

"Fifty dollars fo' der man dat rides him around der ring!"

"Yes."

"I am dat man, Pauline. I capture dat fifty dollars an' we start right away ter housekeepin'. See, honey?"

"An' so it all depends."

"Fo' shuah, Pauline."

"When you ride dat mule?"

"Oh, certainly."

"If you ride dat mule an' cotch dat fifty, den we is all hunk?"

"Yes, Pauline."

Now this conversation took place a short distance away from the theater, where the troupe was performing, and Tim happened to be listening to it.

So he watched this particular couple when they went in, and noted the fact that they took seats near the ring. There did not seem to be anything but hope and expectant delight upon their faces.

And Tim also concluded that he would not have to act that evening, seeing that there was sure to be fun enough without him, but he took a seat just in front of the hopeful couple, so as to be on hand in case the darkey weakened, and also to hear what they had to say, and this part of it afforded him much amusement.

The performance began, but the grand entree nearly took their breath away when they beheld the combined wonders of the show, although perhaps they were not any more wild than the majority of the darkeys present were.

But they both leaped to their feet, amid a chorus of yells for them to sit down, which they reluctantly did.

"Oh, Moses!" she sighed.

"Yas, Pauline."

"Arn't it just awful nice?"

"Neber seed nuffin' like it in all my born days."

"What's dat, Moses?" she asked, as those around her began to laugh.

"Dat? Why, dat—yes, dat—" he replied, not knowing what it was.

"There comes the clown on the educated mule," said some one near by, and Moses at once took it up.

"Yas, dat's de clown, de chap dat makes all de fun, an' dat am de redercated mule."

"Am dat he, Moses?"

"He Moses? Ob case it am he, Moses."

"I mean, am dat he?"

"To be course it am. It am bof he's; de clown and de mule. Oh, what fool nig can't ride dat animile around dat track one time! Bet any man a million dollar to eleven cents dat I ride dat yer mule," said he, looking around for takers.

But it was evident that no one present had the right amount of change with them, for no one took the slightest notice of him, and this made him bolder than ever.

"Nobody seem ter want ter bet me, Pauline. Oh! wait and see me scoop in dat fifty dollar, and den see us skip away fo' ter get hitched up."

"Oh, Moses!"

"What am it, honey?"

"I wish dat dis yer circus come heah free year ago," said she, pathetically.

"How dat, honey?"

"Den we get hitch up afo'."

"Dat am all right, Pauline. We make up fo' it now. Oh, look dar!" he exclaimed, as a bareback act came on.

And during the entire act they sat with widely open eyes and mouth, watching it.

"Oh, Moses! I dun shuah dat he will fall off an' broke his neck," she cried.

"Don't get 'cited, honey. He know his business," said Moses, although he actually thought that the rider would certainly get killed.

Well, first one part of the show and then the other went off, until it came to Smith and the trick mule.

Moses watched this part of the programme with bated breath, for he wanted to see what sort of an animal it was.

Finally the clown got through with his part of the business, and then came the usual challenge, together with the offer of fifty dollars to any person who would successfully ride the mule around the track.

Of course, Smith and the ringmaster supposed that Tim would come into the ring as usual, in some character or other, and were not prepared for anything else.

But that ambitious coon was right on hand. He was in earnest about that fifty dollars, and went forth to conquer.

"Hole on, honey! Wait 'til yer see me scoop in dat fifty cases," said he, leaping up.

"Be car'ful, Moses, fo' I don't want ter be a widder befo' I'se married."

"Dat am all right, honey. Only watch me scoop dat fifty."

Making his way through the rows of people in front of him, he finally tumbled into the ring.

Smith supposed that it was Tim, for he was continually changing his make-up, but when this coon straightened up, he saw that it was not Tim, and that he had got a genuine case of coon on hand for the educated mule racket.

"Once more unto the breach, dear friend, once more!" shouted Smith.

"I don't mind de breeches, boss, but dat yer mule am de humpiest animal dat I eber seen," said Moses, looking a trifle doubtful.

"Well, yes, he is a trifle humpy, but I guess you can fetch him," said Smith. "Try him again."

"Cose I will. Neber gib up ter any mule dat I eber seen walkin' on fo' legs," saying which he again got upon the animal. "Hold on dar, now. No moah ob yer nonsense. Keep yer back on der lebel, honey. Whoa up, dar!"

Yes, he did "whoa up" full as bad as he did before, and that darkey was "whoa'd up" as though he had been shot out of a mortar.

This time the shout was even louder than before.

The roar which greeted that badly broken-up coon as he gathered himself up out of the sawdust, can well be imagined, and he looked so sick that it made people laugh all the more.

"Try another piece of mule, Moses?" asked the clown, laughing and mugging.

But Moses appeared not to have wind enough to make a reply, and only about strength sufficient to get back to his seat again, where his Pauline sat, looking full as sick as he did.

It was evident that her hopes had been crushed fully as bad as her lover's had been, and that she was doomed not to be married right away.

"It am no use, honey," said he, faintly; "dat yer mule hab got de debil in him as big as a hencoop; dar's



After lying there on the grass for a few moments, Smith revived, and found the dogs smelling of him. But there was no human being in sight.

"Ah! my friend, do you believe you can master the lamb?" he asked.

"Lamb! Don't want nuffin ter do wid no lam, I wants ter ride dat mule," said Moses, bracing up.

This produced a burst of laughter, for Moses was as black as the ace of spades and as ungainly as a hedge fence.

"All right, my friend, we will try to accommodate you. How will you have it?"

"Brung on dat mule, mister."

"All right, my brunette friend. Here is the animal in question, and if you will ride him once around the ring, you shall have fifty good United States dollars."

"Dat am my racket, boss," said Moses.

"Here is your seat—until you lose it," said Smith, grinning and leading the mule towards the mule.

"Dat fifty am suah, boss?"

"Oh, good as gold."

"Dat settles it," saying which he leaped upon the mule's back.

"Careful now, Moses!" shouted his gal, Pauline, manifesting great anxiety.

"Dat am all right, honey. See me gobble up dat fifty!" he yelled back.

"Now, then, are you ready?" asked Smith.

"I'se always ready fo' a mule, boss."

"All right, start him!"

The mule started.

That is to say, he progressed about two yards around the ring, and then he "bumped" himself suddenly, and that coon went up into the air about ten feet, and when he came down, he landed in the sawdust, very much broken up and demoralized.

Lucky indeed was it for him that he had a thick neck, or it certainly would have been broken when he came down.

But he was a plucky coon, and recovering himself, notwithstanding the yells and laughter, he again came up for another trial.

but above it all could be heard the voice of Pauline, calling in a high key, and gesticulating wildly: "Car'ful dar, Moses! Catch him roun' de belly."

This encouraged the ambitious coon, and before the hurrah had subsided he had again bestrode the animal, bound to do or die this time.

The audience was enjoying it hugely.

Clasping the mule around the belly with his legs and around the neck with his arms, as so many victims had done before, he again called upon him to go, and help him win that fifty dollars.

The mule went up forward and then behind, but that darkey clung to him like a flea to a dog's back. Then he would rush ahead a few yards, and stopping suddenly, would try to pitch his rider over his head.

In fact, it began to look as though the coon would eventually win.

"Go 'long, honey! if you'se a frien' ob mine, go 'long," said Moses, coaxingly.

"Cling right to him, Moses!" cried his girl, now greatly excited.

"Hang to him, nig!"

"Drive in your spurs!"

"Bite his ear!"

"Twist his tail!"

"Kiss him for his mother!" and half a thousand other cries were directed to him.

But that mule knew his business, and also knew that it was not Tim upon his back. So he manifested more cussedness to the square inch than he had ever been known to show before. Still that plucky coon held on for dear life—and fifty dollars.

All in vain, however, for the next thing the mule did was to deliberately lie down and roll over, nearly crushing the life out of Moses, and causing a panic in the bosom of his girl.

He could stand almost anything but this sort of business, and half buried in the sawdust of the ring, he was obliged to let go his hold, while the mule struggled to his feet and shook himself.

more debil dan mule in his skin," said he, taking a seat beside her.

CHAPTER XXI.

TAKEN all in all, Tim had heaps of fun in New Orleans, for the show was crowded every night, and all sorts of characters were encountered, out of which he and his companions extracted any quantity of amusement.

English Charley, next to Tim, furnished the largest amount of fun for everybody, for he was one of the most jovial fellows alive, and his "lecture" on the various animals in the menagerie was, to everybody but the ignorant portion of the gaping crowd, one of the jolliest pieces of broad comicality that was ever listened to.

And he was full of original notions and burlesque conceits, which enabled him to grapple with any subject at any time.

To northerners the weather was very hot at New Orleans, and some of the animals also felt oppressed by it, kept as they were for the most part in close cages, although others of them, natives of tropical climates, were perfectly at home.

The two-legged members of the company, however, did the larger part of the growling on account of the heat, especially those who had the hardest of the work to do.

"What are you fakers growling about?" asked English Charley of them one afternoon. "What cause have you to complain of the heat?"

"Because it is hot," replied Smith.

"Put ice on it, then."

"But we have no ice."

"Oh! I. C."

"Put a cold door key down your spine when you are in the ring," suggested Bob Stickney.

"But, confound it, the keys are all hot," replied Smith.

"Your kind are generally hot," said Tim.
 "My kind?"
 "Yes, *this*—*keys*."
 "Tim, this climate is too warm for you. You are getting softening of the brain."
 "That's more than some people can get."
 "How so?"
 "Because they haven't any brains to soften," replied Tim.
 This put the laugh on Smith.
 "Oh, you go take a bath."
 "Well, I always take mine on the *outside* at all events."
 "That's where you need them most."
 "But they don't get the best of me."
 "I should say not; you must get the best of the bath."

"Well, it has been a long time since you got the best of one," replied Tim.
 "It seems to me that you have got rather a thin subject for conversation," said English Charley.

"Why so?"
 "Water is a trifle thinner than anything you generally handle."

"Oh, you go to the devil? Who wants to drink water in such a climate as this?"
 "Water'n idea!" put in Stickney.

"But speaking of the heat, the animals got into a growl about it the other day," said Charley.
 "You don't say so."

"Fact."

"Well, what about it?"
 "I will tell you. It was the day before yesterday, which you remember to have been so sweltering. The elephant stood fanning himself with his big ears, when the Polar bear waddled up to him, and said, with a growl: 'Don't you think it about time to put away our furs for the season?'"

"Mine do not bother me," replied the elephant, with a haughty curl in his trunk.

"But mine do, and I think I shall have them packed away in ice."

"The zebra suggested that the best thing he could do would be to nail it to some barn door so as to have it good and dry against the time when he needed it again."

"The fox thought there was meat in the joke. The grizzly bear spoke up, and said he was going to pack his fur in camphor to keep the moths away."

"At this the elephant roared."

"You look," retorted the bear, "as though your furs didn't trouble you much."

"At this Romeo looked a trifle abashed, and wheeled around, facing the others so as to hide the little wisp of hair on the end of his tail, which made it resemble a paint-brush."

"I guess Romeo knows his business better than any of you," said a monkey.

"Why so?" demanded the leopard.

"Because he has been clipped."

"No, the moths got into his fur," said the tiger, with a grin.

"Well, it will take considerable hair restorer to clothe him up again," remarked the lynx.

"Guess Mrs. Allen would take the contract to bring out his hair," chirped in the fox.

"That's the trouble. Something has brought it out already."

"That's so. Why don't you graft yourself to a mouse, old man?" asked the hyena.

"No; vaccinate yourself with a hair brush!" roared the lion.

"Oh, go on," said the elephant. "Have all the fun you want with me. But I can stand the heat, I guess, about as well as the best dressed of you. But I always wear my hair cut close when I travel south, for it saves me from having headaches and eruptions of the skin."

"Oh, that's it, eh?" remarked the panther. "I didn't know but that you had taken your furs off and packed them away in your trunk."

"Tush—tush," said the kangaroo, and as this was the nearest to anything resembling a joke that Kang had ever made, they all did him the honor of laughing at it.

"This broke up the confab, and the panting panther led the way to the nearest saloon," said Charley, finishing his little yarn.

"Charley, you are a colossal liar!" said Smith.

"Rather a humid one, I should say," said Stickney.

"But he ended the piece well. He took his characters all out for a drink," said Smith.

"Don't you wish you had been one of his characters?" asked Tim.

"Yes, I do."

"Well, I think he was," said Bill.

"How so?"

"Didn't he mention the monkey?"

Another laugh on Smith.

"That's so, Smithy," said Charley. "Come and have a drink."

The renewal of the laughter did not prevent Smith from accepting the invitation, for he wasn't that sort of a cat. To get a drink at the expense of somebody else was like sweet balm to his soul.

Well, this is only a specimen of the fun and chaff that was almost always going on in the company, although the reader must not suppose that there were no thorns amid all these roses.

On the contrary, those who travel with shows of this kind meet with a deal of rough experience and hard work. I give here only the bright side of the picture; the fun to be had traveling with a circus, not the hard work and fatigue which often attends it, together with the exposure, which is inevitable, and which often breaks down the strongest constitutions.

From New Orleans they went up the Mississippi river to Baton Rouge, the capital of the state of Louis-

iana, a very pretty place and a lively show town, and where they were billed for three nights.

They were all glad when their course again began to tend northward, for to those not acclimated to that region it is anything but pleasant, even in winter.

Mr. Lent's idea was to proceed north as far as St. Louis, and there lay off for a few weeks in order to reorganize for the coming spring and summer season, and again go east.

At Baton Rouge they also had considerable fun, especially among the darkeys, who flocked in great numbers from all parts of the country to see the show, and they came in all sorts of conveyances, some of them the most laughable imaginable, and never trotted out except when their owner came to town on the Fourth of July, Christmas, or when a circus was advertised.

For instance, there was one old darkey and his family in a cart, one of the two wheels of which was a large ox cart wheel, and the other a small wagon wheel, the consequence being that one side of the cart was about two feet higher than the other, and one of the shafts was away up on the mule's back and the other almost down on his knees.

Taken all in all, it was about the funniest old go-cart ever seen anywhere, and to say nothing of the poor mule who patiently dragged it along, those who rode in it had a hard struggle to keep from falling out on the low side.

And there was another coon and his family who came in to see the show who rode in a two-wheeled cart, the wheels of which were made of planks, cut into the form of big trucks, while the shafts were round poles, the body made of rough boards, and the harness made entirely of withes and home-made hemp ropes.

But never mind, the owners of these comical turn-outs were just as happy as those who rode in high-toned carriages, and ten times as anxious to see the show.

And the desire to "beat" into the show had a few more illustrations at this place, for the showman meets these would-be deadheads everywhere. The desire to get into a circus for nothing seems to spring spontaneously in the human heart, and the novel methods employed would make a dog laugh.

But they got a new illustration at Baton Rouge. The doors were open, and the people began to rush in, when an old darkey woman, or not so very old, presented herself to the ticket-taker, having a twelve-year-old boy in her arms with a shawl wrapped around him, she, of course, presenting but a single ticket.

"Rather a large baby you've got there, aunty," said the ticket-taker. "Have to get another ticket for that infant."

"Why, Lordy bress yer, he's only fo' yeah old," said the woman.

"Four thunders! Stand him down and let me take a look at him."

Reluctantly she did as directed, when a boy almost as big as she was herself came to view.

"Healthy infant, he is! Get another ticket or skip out."

"I tole yer dat he am only fo' yeah ole."

"Bah! what are you giving me?"

"De trufe afo' de Lord. Abraham Lincoln, how ole is you?" she asked of the boy.

"Fo', mudder."

"Dar, you hear dat! Dat boy neber tole a lie in his life."

"Oh, stand out of the way and let the people pass."

"An' you won't luf dat chile go in?"

"Not without a ticket."

"Den de Lord won't neber prosper you. Abraham Lincoln, you go an' steal in under de canvas," she added, in a whisper to him, and away he went and in she went.

This case was only selected by the writer on account of its oddity, not that it is a bit more cheeky than dozens of others.

But it was at this very place that another curious customer presented himself to the ticket-taker the next night.

"Ticket?"

"No sir; I never pay to go into shows where there are animals," said the man.

"Why not? Who are you?"

"I am Professor Jumpski, the renowned naturalist and eminent biologist, and wonderful charmer and subduer of wild animals," said the old duffer.

"Don't know anything about you, sir; never heard of you; get a ticket."

"But I tell you that you are making a great mistake in refusing to let me pass in, for I can enhance the interest of your show."

"That can't be done, old man, for we have got the biggest show on earth."

"But I can subdue animals."

"Ours are all subdued; get a ticket."

Just then English Charley happened to come along, and overhearing a portion of the conversation, he naturally listened.

"Here, Charley, see what this man wants," said the ticket-taker.

"Well, sir, what can I do for you?"

"I am the celebrated Professor Jumpski, the great naturalist, tamer and charmer of wild animals, and I wish to pass free into your show in the interest of science."

"But it is against the rules, sir."

"Rules are nothing to men of science, sir."

"But they are to men of circus."

"I will enhance your entertainment by giving an exhibition of my wondrous power."

"Will you," asked Charley, quickly, for he suddenly snuffed some fun.

"Yes, I have come all prepared; I will first biologize

your elephant and then put a charm upon him so that I can handle him as I would a baby."

"All right; come right in, and when the circus is over, I will introduce you to the crowd which assembles in the menagerie."

"Very good, sir, I will astonish the people."

"I trust so," said Charley, leading him to a seat handy to the menagerie.

Now it appeared that the old fellow was a harmless old beat, although he really did believe that he could mesmerize any animal, however ferocious, and so he felt highly elated at the prospect of making a sensation on his own account.

As for English Charley, he was never more delighted in his life, for fun was as good to him as meat and drink any time, and so he gave the racket away to the rest of the gang, and told them to be sure to be on hand after the circus to see it work.

And you bet he was there. Taking the professor by the arm, he led him into the menagerie before the rush commenced, and introduced him to the animals.

"Ah! here I am perfectly at home," said the professor, rubbing his hands; "in fact, I can hardly resist the temptation to biologize some of the animals now."

"Not yet, professor; wait until I have gone through with my part of the business for the edification of the vulgar and uneducated throng, then I will introduce you to the people in a few eloquent remarks."

"Thanks; I am glad to find that you are a student of my beloved science."

Charley was true to his word; and after leading the throng around to the different cages, and introducing the different animals in his own inimitable way, he said:

"Ladies and gentlemen: I have to-night an extra treat in store for you; and this, of course, produced much interest. "I have the almost unspeakable honor of introducing to you the world renowned naturalist, biologist, mesmerist, and subduer of wild animals, who will entertain you a few moments with some experiments with the elephant Romeo."

Thus introduced, the professor got upon a bench near where Romeo stood, and began:

"Ladies and gentlemen, and lovers of natural philosophy, the immortal Shakespeare tells us that there be more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy. The great bard evidently meant natural philosophy, in which I am an adept. Man is the king and master of all beasts, and if he can only get rid of the unnatural fear that is within him for wild animals, he possesses the power of completely subduing them to harmlessness and making them the slaves of his superiority. Take, for instance, this quadrupedal mammoth—the largest of beasts now existing upon the earth—in his native jungles he is the terror of both man and all other beasts. But if man only knew his power, neither the elephant nor any of the other ferocious beasts which we see around us could harm him. Man possesses a mesmeric or biological power, before which they tremble, if he only knows how to use it. I should not be afraid to meet any of these animals in their untamed condition; and to show you the power which I possess over them, I will just use it upon this elephant," said he, turning towards him. "Observe the few magnetic passes which I make use of;" and he commenced to move his hands slowly in front of Romeo's face. "He feels it even now, and will soon be completely under the influence of my will power."

Romeo, be it understood, was by this time so tired and sleepy that he took not the slightest notice of the professor. He saw English Charley and his keeper near by, and of course concluded that nothing unusual was to take place.

"You see that he is perfectly docile. In fact, he is now so completely in my power that I can do anything I wish to him. But I have discovered another great secret in connection with elephants. There grows in his native land an herb of which they are very fond, but which if dried and burned, and they inhale the smoke, it so charms them that they will follow you around like a dog. I brought some of the herb with me from Siam, and will now give you an illustration of its charming power."

With this announcement he proceeded to fill a pipe with some sort of weed and to light it in the ordinary way, after which he called for an umbrella to assist him in his experiments.

"It will not hurt the animal, will it?" asked Charley, who didn't know what the great professor was about to do.

"Not in the least. On the contrary it will do him good. Elephants taken from their native land sigh and pine for this herb, and sometimes actually go mad for the want of it."

"Is it terbacker?" asked some one in the mob.

"No, sir, it is not," said the professor, "and with the gentlemen please not break in upon the experiment again."

"Order, gentlemen! Professor Jumpski is not used to being interrupted," said Charley.

"He can bet his life that he'll get interrupted if he goes fooling around Romeo much," said Tim, who with the other members of the company were present to see the fun.

"That's so," said Bob Stiekney.

"Go it, ole charmer!" said somebody.

"Order gentlemen!" shouted Charley.

"Ladies and gentlemen, did I not know that my experiment would turn all this to applause I might feel chagrined. This is an age of learning and progress, and I will now proceed with my experiment."

Having secured an umbrella he at once began his charming business on old sleepy Romeo. Opening the umbrella he got behind it and approached the elephant

slowly, at the same time puffing away at his pipe full of herbs.

Getting close to him he dropped upon his knees and began puffing the smoke into Romeo's trunk so that he might inhale it and be charmed.

The elephant got a few whiffs of it, and began to eye the professor. Then he curled his trunk and began to flop his ears back and forth.

"I've got him!" cried the professor.

CHAPTER XXII.

Oh, yes, he had him.

I am speaking of Professor Jumpski, who was on the point of charming the elephant, Romeo, at the close of the last chapter, as must be remembered.

"How about your bones?" asked Tim, and the crowd gathered around him.

"I—I didn't get a fair chance," said he.

"But Romeo did," suggested Tim.

"I guess my pipe wasn't loaded heavy enough," moaned the professor, whereat everybody laughed.

"But how about your bones? Any marrow leaking out of them?"

"Hold on; let me see if I can walk."

"Let him walk."

"Give him a chance."

"Make room for the great professor."

"The boss biologist."

"Give the old man a chance."

"Let him try his bones," and Charley succeeded

that portion of the evening's entertainment was missing.

From Baton Rouge the combination went to Natchez, for two performances, but here the only uncommon fun which they had was with a big buck nigger, who attempted to ride the educated mule in order to catch the fifty dollars reward.

The result was about as usual, so far as the coon's getting bounced and tumbled about the ring was concerned, but this made him awfully mad, and he turned upon the mule to buck the stuffing out of him.

In this he nearly succeeded, for it was something new to him, and striking him squarely in the ribs with his head, he knocked him over into the sawdust amid the most uproarious laughter.

Both Smith and the ringmaster rushed to the rescue



"You ordered everything that came up here, and the bill amounts to one hundred and ten dollars."

"I have him!" he exclaimed, as the smoke from his pipe full of weeds was blown out from behind his umbrella.

And, as I said before, he did have him. Very much and badly.

That is to say, he had him mad, and the first thing he knew that elephant whom he had charmed caught him up with his trunk, and after whirling him around two or three times, finally flung him over the heads of the spectators and landed him about fifty feet away.

Such a "broken up" specimen of a scientist was never seen before.

His umbrella was smashed; his head was driven into his hat almost out of sight; his clothes were nearly all torn from his angular body, and what was quite as bad, the crowd was rearing at him in the loudest way.

English Charley and Tumbling Tim rushed to his rescue and succeeded in gathering him up.

"Are you hurt?" asked Tim.

"Any bones broken?" asked Charley.

"Oh, Lord! Careful, now—let me feel of myself," said the professor. "I really believe that every bone in my body is broken," he whined, feeling himself all over.

It was the greatest wonder in the world that it was not so, but fortunately not a bone was broken, although collectively he was the worst broken up man that was ever exhibited in public.

"Good for the charmer!" yelled somebody.

"Good for the elephant!" said somebody else.

"Didn't he subdue him nicely!"

"Got him down like Mary's little lamb."

"Followed him around like a dog."

"Never anything like it seen in Baton Rouge."

"Great man!"

"How is it with you, professor?" asked English Charley, seemingly anxious.

"Oh, Lord!" he groaned.

in pressing the crowd back so as to give Jumpski a chance.

Just then Tim let go of him, and he slowly hobbled along as though yet uncertain whether he was out of joint or not.

A loud, laughing cheer greeted him as he struggled along, and the crowd was having more than their money's worth, which of course put them in good humor.

"Oh, you're all right," suggested Tim.

"I—I guess I am, if nothing is broken in my internal machinery. But it was a most wonderful escape; he must have hurled me as high as a house."

"Well, he did heave you a trifle—but how about your charming him?"

"Something wrong about it; guess there were too many people about, and it disconcerted him, most likely," said the professor.

"Would you like a private interview with Romeo?"

"N—no; I—I don't feel very well just now, and I guess I'll go home and attend to my bruises."

"All right; you can experiment on the elephant any time while we remain in the city. He can stand it if you can."

The old fellow made no reply, for he evidently thought that English Charley had told the truth; and so he made his way out of the laughing crowd and headed for home, not covered with honor, as he had expected, but sadly covered with dirt, as he did not expect.

This little episode created quite as much fun for Tim and different members of the circus company as it did for the people who attended the show, and, to tell the truth, a great many attended the following night in hopes that the old fellow would try to biologize the elephant again.

But Professor Jumpski had got all he wanted of Romeo. The big animal didn't biologize worth a cent, and he had no notion of trying it again; consequently,

of the mule, but that animal was amply able to take care of himself, for he quickly recovered his feet and went for his black enemy.

"Go 'way dar! I show yer how ter fool wid a full grown man," he cried.

But before he could get out of the way Mr. Mule's heels hit him in the bread basket and knocked him end over end for about twenty feet.

This in turn created another laugh, amid which the damaged coon gathered himself up just far enough to present a good target as he stood on all fours, and again did those heels hit him where he had no skull, and tumbled him over in a badly damaged and aching condition.

"Whoa—whoa, dar! Took him away I tole yer! He stove me all up!" yelled the darkey, imploringly.

Smith caught the mule by the bridle and attempted to lead him away, but by this time the beast's back was completely up, and he went for the clown at such a lively rate that he was glad to escape.

Then the ringmaster tried to pacify him, but all to no purpose, although the darkey had by this time escaped, limping away, and Tim was the only person who could control and lead him from the ring and soothe his ruffled temper.

But that ambitious and revengeful coon got all he wanted, and it is safe to say that he has ever since then kept clear of educated mules, if not of all kinds.

The company, however, had quite as much of a laugh over Smith as they did at the misfortunes of the darkey.

While on their way to the next show place, the idea was broached by some one that it would be the game and proper thing to do, to have a little experience in hunting, having heard there was a plenty of game in the surrounding country; and this idea took, especially with Smith, the clown, who always claimed to be a first-class hunter, and Bob Stickney liked the idea, as did English Charley, Tumbling Tim, and several other members of the company.

So after arriving in town they thought to make inquiries respecting the prospect, and they were fortunate enough to light upon a regular old tough south-wester.

English Charley approached him as spokesman for the party.

"I say, my friend, is there any game hereabouts?"

"Game! Waal, stranger, I kinder reckon there be," said he, after flopping his quid of tobacco over into the other cheek.

"Ah! just what we are after. What sort of game do you have here?"

"Waal, now, stranger, we're sort o' 'commodatin' class o' people out this way, an' we can give yer almost anything that yer wants, from faro, poker, euchre and sich, down to billiards an' pool."

"Ah, my dear sir, you do not quite understand me. We want shooting," replied Charley.

"Waal, now, we do a little of that too if a chap arn't square. Guess you can get 'commodated in this town if you want shootin'. Nothin' mean 'bout us."

"No—no, we wish to go huntin' for game."

"Needn't hunt a minit. I'll steer yer right to ther chips."

"We want animals."

"Ther tiger?" he asked, innocently.

"No—no. We wish to have a day's fun in the woods shooting game. Now do you comprehend?"

"Oh! long gunning for creeters, eh?"

"Exactly."

"Waal, I axes yer pardon. Yer see, I'm a sort of a 'steerer' for frisky strangers, an' I didn't know but that yer wanted sport."

"So we do, but not that kind. Any game around these parts?" asked Stickney.

"Waal, now, it 'pears to me I've hearn tell 'bout fellers killin' somethin' or other two or three miles back of this," said he, reflecting.

"What sort of game was it?"

"Cuss my luck if I know. Guess it war squirrels, buffaloes, or somethin'."

Seeing that they could make but little if anything out of this old tough, they at once proceeded to question somebody else.

The result was that they learned there was quite a quantity of small game in the surrounding forests, and an occasional elk and gazelle; sometimes foxes and wolves were to be found.

This decided them at once, and making ready for a day's sport they started for a dense forest situated about five miles from town, being transported thither in one of the carriages belonging to the circus.

"I don't want to waste a bullet on anything smaller than buffalo," said Smith, with the air of a man who has accomplished great things and feels bad because there are no great ones present for his gratification.

"A chip squirrel will do for me," said Tim, for the purpose of guying him.

"Are you a bad shot, that you wish for such large game?" asked Charley.

"No, sir; I always shoot them through the eyes," replied Smith, proudly.

"Eyes! I have always heard that it was impossible to see a buffalo's eyes without parting the hair of his mane which flows over them."

"Yes, that's so; but I know exactly where they are situated, and can send a ball through them every time."

This created a derisive yell.

"I'll bet you on it!"

"And I'll bet you the feed and wash for to-night after the show that you never shot anything larger than a rabbit," said Stickney.

"I'll do it."

"And I'll let you prove it."

"All right."

"And I'll bet you, Smithy, that you will run from a buffalo if you see one to-day," said Tim.

"Bah, boy!" he replied, contemptuously.

"What was the largest game you ever shot?" asked English Charley, quizzingly.

"He struck a landlord once; guess that was his biggest game," said Tim.

"A buffalo bull—"

"Buffalo Bill?" they all asked.

"A bull buffalo. Do you understand now?"

"Ever kill many of 'em?"

"Oh, possibly fifty, all told, and any quantity of smaller game—such as bears, moose, deer, wolves and the like."

The wink went around, but Smith failed to notice it.

"But they kept up the chaffing and the telling of big yarns until they reached a deep cut through the mountains, with a huge forest lining the distance on either side.

This was the locality to which they had been directed, and all hands proceeded to unload themselves from the wagon and to get all ready for the hunt, while the teamster was to remain with the wagon until their return.

"We may want you, though, if Smith kills a buffalo," said Charley, as they started away.

"Oh, don't you bother about me, for you won't hear my rifle unless I strike big game."

"He strikes them before he shoots 'em," said Tim.

"I suppose that is to let them know he is coming—just as oystermen bang an oyster with a knife before opening him."

They all laughed but Smith.

"Now, then, let's separate and meet here again at five o'clock," said Stickney, "each one of us taking different routes."

"No, let's go in couples," said Smith.

"No, every one on his own hook."

"But supposing one of us kills a beast too big to bring in, and wants help?"

"In that case fire two shots in rapid succession, and we will all concentrate and lend you assistance."

"This being understood, they all plunged into the woods, some on one side of the cut and some on the other. But they all noticed that Smith held back and was the last one to lose himself in the forest. They all went on, however, for they were bent on having some sport, it being quite new to them.

There was certainly more hunting than game, although now and then the ring of a rifle in some direction or other showed that something was being shot at if not hit. But let us follow Smith.

Finding himself left alone, his buncombe courage seemed to ooze out of him rapidly. The forest was dark and full of ravines, and although he did not see anything in the shape of game that was large enough to draw a charge from his gun, yet the thought that he might strike something that would strike back produced a shakiness which grew upon him as he strayed away from the road.

The first thing that really startled him was a little chip squirrel which suddenly sprang up a tree "chittering" loudly, and this fairly made the hair stand erect upon his head. Then before it had a chance to get down again, another of them jumped up close behind, and raising his rifle he fired at random, scarcely knowing what he did.

Silence, however, soon reigned again, and seeing nothing further to shatter his nerves, he proceeded to reload his rifle for another "emergency."

This done, he stood a moment and gazed around, while his heart beat tumultuously against his ribs. Gradually recovering his composure, so far as it could be recovered in such a place, he began to penetrate a few rods further into the forest. But so unstrung were his nerves that he would start and get excited if he chanced to step upon a dry twig that in breaking made any noise.

"Pshaw! what is there to be afraid of?" he muttered, to himself, as he heard the rifle of one of his friends in the distance.

Then he walked on a little further and finally sat down upon a stone at the foot of a tree to rest from his labors.

He sat there for some time, all the while hoping to goodness that he wouldn't see anything more to startle him, when a disturbance in some bushes near by attracted his attention and lifted his hair again.

Arising slowly to his feet, what was his terrible astonishment at seeing an old she wolf and her cub a few rods away, gazing intently at him.

For an instant he was completely paralyzed, and shook as though he had the ague; and had the wolf been courageous enough there would, in all probability, have been one less clown in the business; for utterly overcome with fear, he sank back upon the log utterly powerless.

"Oh, Lord!" he groaned; and then he tried to think of a prayer to say. "Now I lay me—hope to die—if I should die before I wake—"

But here his teeth chattered so that he nearly bit his tongue off, and had to dismiss meeting.

Just then the old wolf made a movement towards him, and this somehow roused him a trifle, and throwing aside his rifle, he took to the tree and went up it like a badger.

Reaching a limb about twenty feet from the ground, he clutched it like a drowning man, and rested for breath, while the wolf and her cub approached to the spot he had lately occupied and began smelling of his rifle, and then to look longingly up the tree.

It was with the utmost difficulty that he retained his grasp upon the limb and saved himself from falling, all the while mumbling disjointed bits of prayers, and wondering if wolves could climb trees.

"Oh, Lord! this is a precious scrape. What will become of me?" he groaned. "Wonder where the other fellows are? Oh, Lord! the beast is going to climb up here after me," said he, as he saw the wolf put her forepaws up the tree and look wistfully up at him. "I've half a mind to fire at her with my revolver. But perhaps that would only make her all the more savage. What shall I do?"

Utterly bewildered, and frightened almost enough to make his hair turn white, he sat there upon his perch, and tried to think of some way out of his dilemma, while the wolf lay down at the foot of the tree to suckle her cub, most likely assuring it that it was only soup before meat.

He must have remained perched up there for fully an hour, when he remembered the signal agreed upon in case assistance was needed, and taking his revolver from his pocket with a trembling hand, he fired two shots in rapid succession.

The others heard them, and at once responded, not knowing who had given the signal, and presently they began to draw around Smith from different points of the compass.

As for the wolf, she looked up as much as to ask him what he was talking about, and then resumed her maternal duties just as calmly as ever, while Smith groaned in anguish of spirit.

Bob Stickney, English Charley, and Tim united just before reaching the spot, and each became curious to know who it was that had fired the signal shots.

"I'll bet a dollar that it was Smith," said Charley.

"Then he must have found a buffalo."

"Hold on!" cried Tim, who was a few steps in front of the other two. "There's a wolf up there by the foot of that tree. Let me send her a message," he added, drawing up his rifle for a shot.

"Bet the cigars you don't hit her."

"Done," replied Tim, and "done" it was for Mrs. Wolf, for with good luck and aim, he had sent a bullet through her head, and she was now tumbling around in the leaves and brush, while English Charley sprang after the cub.

Stickney and Tim shook hands and then started for the game.

"Halloo! what's this—a rifle," said Tim, picking up Smith's discarded weapon.

"It is Smith's! Where is he, I wonder?"

"Here I am, up here!" cried Smith, as he began to shin down the tree.

"What the devil are you doing up there?"

"At least fifty wolves chased me and I had to take refuge up here," said he, while the others exchanged smiling glances.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Yes, sir, there were at least fifty wolves after me in a pack, and as I only had time to fire one shot, I saw that my only hope was to climb this tree," said Smith, whose hunting exploits in the preceding chapter will be remembered.

"What the devil are you giving us?" demanded Bob Stickney, indignantly.

"A straight tip."

"A straight lie, you mean. There wasn't but the one wolf, which Tim has just killed."

"I say you are mistaken, Bob. The woods are full of 'em."

"Nonsense; we have all come in from different directions in answer to your signal, and not a wolf have any of us seen."

"But don't you suppose I know what I saw?" demanded Smith, indignantly.

"No!" they all cried, at the same time laughing so heartily that they attracted the other hunters, who speedily joined them.

"Well, if you duffers don't believe me, you can just do the other thing, that's all."

"And that is just what we intend to do, most emphatically, and don't let it slip from your memory," replied Stickney.

"Spit on your hands and get a good hold on that rope, old man," said English Charley.

"Oh, you go to the devil! You have an idea that nothing is smart that you don't do, being, of course, like other Englishmen. I tell you that I was treed by a pack of wolves!"

"Wolves? Why, a flock of sheep would make you weaken and climb a tree."

"Oh, that's too thin, Smithy. You know very well that there was but this single wolf, and that you got frightened, threw away your rifle, and skipped up this tree. So own up."

"Oh, no; you are wrong, gentlemen," said Tumbling Tim, ironically; "there must have been a pack of wolves after him."

"Of course," put in Smith.

"For didn't he tell us that he had been a great hunter in his day? that he never put up his rifle for anything smaller than a buffalo? Of course there must have been at least a hundred very bad wolves after him or he never would have gone up this tree."

This produced a loud laugh at the expense of the crestfallen boaster, although he still insisted that a drove of wolves had chased him, and no amount of laughter or ridicule could make him weaken enough to admit the truth.

"Well, let's get back to the wagon," said English Charley.

"Yes, we have had some capital sport, and this little wolf racket rounds it off very nicely," said Bob Stickney, laughing. "Here, Hugo," he added, turning to the cannon-ball tosser, who made one of the company, "you have nothing to carry, so take this wolf on your back and carry it to the wagon."

"Smith has nothing to carry," suggested Hugo, who, although a very powerful man, did not care much about exercising his strength outside of the ring.

"You are mistaken, my boy, Smith has got to carry his conscience," replied Bob, whereat the woods again rang with laughter.

Hugo took up the wolf as easily as a child would raise its doll, and they all started down the hill towards the waiting wagon.

"Oh, you go to the devil!" growled Smith, as he walked sullenly behind, but this only provoked another laugh.

Of all the rackets that had ever been played on Smith, or of all the snaps he had ever gotten himself into, this was the worst by a large majority.

And a sicker man than he was could not be found the world over, although he firmly made up his mind to stick to the wolf story as the only escape from further ridicule.

They laughed and joked him all the way back to the city.

"Better set up the nourishment for the gang, and then we will let up on you," said English Charley.

"Yes, better wipe it all out that way."

"Sponge it out, Smithy," suggested Tim.

"How can he sponge it out?"

"Why, with a few bottles of wine and some sponge-cake," replied Tim.

"Oh, that will never do for me," said Stickney.

"Nothing short of a regular feed will buy me off."

"No—no, nothing cheap will shut me up either," said Hugo.

"Make it a dozen bottles, with the regular accompaniments after the show to-night, and we will let up on you, old man. Nothing short of that will keep us from giving it all away."

"Oh, you go to the devil, all of you!" growled Smith.

"And you won't do it?"

"Not a bit of it."

"All right; that settles it."

"I guess people will believe me quite as quick as they will you; and if you want to work the racket, go ahead," said he.

Well, that did settle it, for Smith was as ugly as a dog with a sore head, and in no humor to compromise

with the boys who had caught him so nicely; and they reached the city without further incident worthy of narration.

Their friends gave them a fine reception, for nearly every one of them had some specimen of game to show, and Tim especially came in for a large share of the honors, he having killed a wolf, the largest specimen of game that any of them had brought down; and English Charley came next, having killed the old wolf's cub.

But when they came to tell the story of Smith's adventure with that wolf and cub, there was nothing but a prolonged laugh among the members of the company and their acquaintances.

Smith at first assumed to take no notice of the matter; or sometimes he would laugh and say the boys

pose, which I am sure you will all drink with the greatest zest. It is this: Here is long life and health to our entertainer, the mighty Nimrod of our profession!"

"Hi—hi—hi!" was the response, and all hands arose to their feet to drink the toast in Smith's honor.

"Smith—Smith!"

"Speech—speech!" were the cries.

Smith saw at once that they had got the dead wood on him, but judging by his past experience, he knew the best thing for him to do was to get out of it the easiest way possible; and so, assuming a smile that was a stranger to his heart, he arose to respond to the toast.

"Gentlemen," he began, "I thank you for the honor you have done me in partaking of this supper at my

they worked around so as to get at the only really vulnerable point of an alligator.

But Mr. Alligator was not idle all this time, and seeing a good opportunity when they approached near enough to him, he wheeled suddenly around, and raising his huge tail, he struck the stern of the boat, smashing it into smithereens, and sending the occupants into the air about fifty feet.

Of course they had to come down again, for they couldn't stay up there very well, and the next instant all three of them went below the surface of the river.

Smith and the others at once rowed to their rescue, fearing that the alligators might pounce upon them, and make a meal of at least two important members of Mr. Lent's company.

The "coon" was the first to come up, and the way



Raising his huge tail, he struck the stern of the boat, smashing it into smithereens, and sending the occupants into the air about fifty feet.

would have their joke, and in this way try to keep off the force of the blow.

But it was all in vain, however, for everybody was disposed to believe it, and when he attempted to palm off that yarn about being chased up a tree by a drove of wolves, he got laughed at all the more, and was most unmercifully jibed by every member of the circus company.

Finally, after he had endured this for about a week, he began to weaken.

"I see you fellows have got me foul," said he, one day, "and I suppose that nothing short of a feed will induce you to let up on me."

"Well, that's about the measure of it," said English Charley.

"But don't you think it is worth a good neat supper?" asked Tim.

"No, sir. If the story was true, then it possibly might be, but when it is simply a racket, a put up job on me, then I do not so regard it," replied Smith, warmly.

A prolonged "Oh!" greeted this, and he saw plainly enough that there was no escape for him short of a great treat, and so he finally agreed to the proposition.

"But I'll get square with you fellows for all this," he added.

"How? Going hunting again?" asked Tim, looking curiously at him.

"No, sir. I shall try to keep good company after this," replied Smith.

"But how are you going to do it?" asked Stickney.

"What do you mean?"

"How are you going to get rid of yourself?"

"Oh, pshaw!" said he, turning away. But he paid for a big wine supper, although with exceeding poor grace, and the gang made the most of it, drinking his health and making burlesque speeches.

"Gentlemen," said Stickney, "I have a toast to pro-

expense, and toasting me with comical irony. But as you refuse to believe what I tell you about those wolves, why, let it pass, and I will assume the title of Nimrod, a mighty hunter, if that will make you feel better. But no more hunting for me. I won't give you another chance to get the laugh on me, and at the same time I give you all fair warning that I shall get the straps on you at the first opportunity."

This was his speech, and as though to carry the mockery still further, they loudly applauded him.

And so the affair ended for the time being, although the memory of it never forsook any one of the participants.

But it so happened that both English Charley and Tumbling Tim caught a snap only a few days afterwards, and which went a great ways towards making Smith feel hunk, and rather turned the laugh on them.

They took it into their heads to go out shooting alligators one afternoon, a large number of them having been seen in the neighborhood of where they were performing, and although they knew no more about the business than they did about preaching, yet they had read so much about the peculiar sport that they felt perfectly competent to try it, at least.

Taking a steamboat, they sailed about five miles down the river, accompanied thus far by Smith, Hugo, and one or two others, who were out strictly to see the fun, but to take no part in the hunting.

Arriving at the bayou, they hired a flat-bottomed boat and a small darkey to pull them out to the locality said to be infested by a colony of visiting alligators, while the others procured a rowboat and followed leisurely behind.

They were not long before they came upon a big fellow, about fifteen feet in length, and they at once went for him, firing at random, and of course the bullets glanced off his tough hide without doing any harm.

"Fi' at his eye, boss!" shouted the darkey, and then

he did yell was a caution; and then Tim and Charley came up all covered with mud from the bottom in which they had for a moment stuck.

"Help—help!" shouted the darkey. "Took me in fus'—took me in fus', for dey love nig better'n white man—took me in quick!" and he struck out for the approaching boat.

All three of them were presently rescued, but a more demoralized pair of hunters were never seen than were Tim and Charley. As for the nig, he was frightened almost white, it being a superstition among his race that an alligator will pass a white man by and go for one of the brunettes instead.

The rifles and everything were gone to the bottom, and the life was almost knocked out of them by the tremendous bounce they had received.

They were sick—sick of alligator hunting at all events—and the next thing in order was to get back to their starting-place, only to be laughed at by those to whom Smith told the story of their adventure; and as before stated, Smith was almost happy, not only because misery loves company, but because it turned the attention of the circus company from his wolf hunt.

It was at Jackson, Mississippi, that the next event occurred worthy of note, and this was also against Tim, whose lucky star seemed to have lately gone behind a cloud, while that of Smith was in the ascendant.

It was during the second night's performance there that Tim came into the ring as usual to do his business with the educated mule. On the previous evening several volunteers had come to grief, and on this occasion it was thought by the public that no one would be rash enough to try to win the fifty dollars reward by attempting to ride the mule.

"I have got a new snap for our biz to-night," Smith said, while they were going to the show that evening.

"All right. What is it?"

"Well, after the mule has bounced you once, I will say that the only reason why he will not carry a stranger is because he is not properly marked and directed; so I will pretend to mark you like a package of goods on your back. See?"

"All right," replied Tim, and so the matter dropped.

Well, as the reader understands the business pretty well by this time I will not enter into a description of it. But when the regular challenge came, Tim, dressed as a smart young blood, marched into the ring, and in the usual manner accepted the challenge and offered to try for the reward.

"All right. Another ambitious youth," said Smith, "mugging" to the audience, who broke out into a loud laugh.

Tim got upon the mule, creating the usual amount of fun, and, as usual, getting thrown over his head into the sawdust.

"Oh, I'll tell you what the trouble is, young fellow," said Smith, approaching him after he had again taken his seat in the saddle.

"All right, I wish you would."

"The mule being highly educated, refuses to carry any package that is not properly marked and directed. Now allow me to mark you on the back and see how differently the business will result."

"All right. Go ahead," said Tim.

Smith had a marking brush and pot near at hand, but instead of having ink in the pot, he had some muckilage, and taking a brush full of it, he wrote in large letters upon Tim's back the word ASS, although, of course, they did not show at that moment.

"There you are. Now try him again," said he, after finishing the marking.

Again did Tim essay to ride the mule around the track, but the mule understood his business so well that he knew there was yet a tussle and a roll over in the sawdust to be gone through with, and so did Tim, who braced himself for the occasion by locking his arms and legs around the animal.

He knew exactly what the mule would do, but he didn't know how that marking business would turn out. In fact, he never gave it a thought, believing that it was only a little new business of Smith's.

"Go it, you big rabbit!" shouted Tim, and then the audience shouted.

"Go it, Mr. Mule. Your cargo has got the proper mark on it now," said the clown, encouragingly, and then he went through with some more mugging to the audience, who without doubt regarded him as the funniest creature that ever walked on two legs, and the mule next best, on four.

Well, of course the mule started. That was his business, as it was Tim's to cling to him for quite a while in the seeming frantic endeavor to retain his seat and ride him around the ring.

"Whoop-la!" shouted the clown.

"Whoop her up!" replied Tim.

"Go it, young 'un!" cried several in the audience.

And Tim did go it for a rod or two and began to receive cheers from his auditors, as he had done on so many occasions, when it began to seem probable that he would succeed in winning the money.

But the mule broke off all their anticipations by lying down as usual, Tim clinging to him, and the two of them rolling over and over in the sawdust.

Nearly ever since going into the southern states, Mr. Lent had ordered Tim not to ride the mule around the ring as he had frequently done at the north, because in these states nearly every one considered himself equal to any mule that ever ate corn, and for that reason he didn't wish anybody to succeed in riding him, for fear his reputation would suffer in consequence. This will explain what follows.

Well, as a natural consequence, Tim got up from that encounter all covered with sawdust and seemingly badly broken up, although in truth he was not hurt at all.

The clown rushed for him with a broom as he sometimes did on other occasions.

"My dear sir, I hope you are not all broken to pieces?"

"Oh, no, but I guess I don't want that fifty dollars," replied Tim, whereat the audience fairly screamed.

"Perhaps you only tried it for fun?"

"That's all."

"I thought so. Did you have your fun?"

"Oh, lots of it."

"Good exercise, ain't it?"

"First-class. But I thought you said there would be no trouble after you put the proper mark on me?"

"Well, really, my dear sir, I do not understand it, but perhaps the mule does."

"It is to be hoped he does. But I guess you are not a good marker."

"Oh, no trouble about the marking, but most likely the mule resented it as slightly personal. However, allow me to brush the sawdust from your clothes, for it will never do to allow you to take so much of our ring away with you;" and at it he went, brushing the dust from his clothing with much ceremony, stopping once or twice to "mug" at the audience, who were anxiously awaiting developments.

Now it must be understood that the sawdust stuck to the muckilage lettering which Smith had placed upon Tim's back, and after he had brushed him off well the big letters stood out in bold relief:

"A S S!"

Smith turned him around so that the people on all sides could see him, at the same time pointing to the letters and doing some of his most comical mugging.

A roar went up which must have been heard a mile away. Tim could not for the life of him understand what it meant, and so confused did he become, while everybody was yelling "Ass" at him, that he retired to the dressing-tent, there only to meet a renewal of the laughter from the company.

"Smith has got you this time," said Stickney, at the same time showing Tim the sell.

He looked at it in amazement, after pulling off his coat. Yes, it was a sell, indeed.

"Yes, lads, I admit it," said he, at length, "but if I don't get away with him before a week, I'll give you all the privilege of kicking Tumbling Tim."

CHAPTER XXIV.

FROM Jackson the circus and menagerie combination went to Vicksburg.

The high old joke that Smith, the clown, had played upon Tumbling Tim was still fresh in his memory, as it undoubtedly is in the mind of the reader, and the chief ambition of the young fellow's life now was to get even with him for it.

Of course the laugh was on him among the company, for although he was a favorite generally, such was their relish for practical jokes that they were bound to laugh at anybody who got the worst of one.

But of late there had been a little too much of the general laugh turned upon Tim, and he was somewhat soured by it, although he knew too much to "kick" openly, as that would have provoked only more laughter.

Smith, however, destroyed a nice piece of ring business, for Tim would never allow himself to be marked again, and so he had to fall back on his old snaps in order to carry out his part of the business with the trick mule.

And he was kept in constant fear all the time thereafter, knowing well enough that Tim would retaliate at the first opportunity, and he had had enough experience to dread his way of doing such things, for he always hit back hard.

But the trouble with Smith was that he always looked the wrong way. He was even now expecting some trick by Tim, and yet he looked for something big, something that was pretty sure not to come.

Tim had a quiet way of doing things, and on their arrival at Vicksburg, he inserted in the *Herald* the following advertisement:

"WANTED.—A few tame coons, for which the highest price will be paid. Call for Smith at the Vicksburg House."

This was tucked into an out-of-the-way place in the paper where most likely neither Smith nor any other member of the company would be apt to notice it, and Tim, looking as honest as a cat, quietly awaited the result of it.

The paper was published the next morning, and he did not have to wait long to hear from it, for at an early hour the negroes began to arrive, each with one or more tame coons. Some had them in baskets, some in bags, some carried them in their arms, and one big, buck darkey had his in his hat.

The proprietor and help about the hotel were greatly astonished at this demonstration, for although he knew that more darkeys as a general thing had tame coons than cats, yet he was surprised that there were so many in Vicksburg, and the only conclusion he could come to was that they saw a way whereby they could get into the circus.

And this was really the reason why so many responded and were willing to part with their pets, for nothing short of starvation or the advent of a circus will tempt a darkey to part with his tame coon.

Fully fifty of them crowded into the bar and sitting-room, or lounged about the bar-room and tried to "hang up" drinks until they sold their coons. But in this they slipped up every time.

The landlord was indignant at first, but when they showed the advertisement in the *Herald*, he became partially mollified. Smith had not yet risen, although Tim and English Charley were up and quietly taking it all in. Finally the bothered landlord approached Charley, and asked:

"Do you know anything about these coons?"

"Nothing in particular; I simply know that they are coons, that's all," replied Charley.

"But this Smith belongs to your circus?"

"Yes; there is a Smith with us—the clown."

"Well, he is the only person by that name in my house and he must be the one they are after."

"All these darkeys?" asked Tim, wondering.

"Yes; but what the devil does he want of these tame coons I'd like to know?"

"I give it up. But he is a very eccentric man and is liable to do anything," replied Tim.

"But it strikes me that I have heard him say lately that he thought of getting up some sort of an act with tame coons," added Charley.

"Well, then, that must be it," said Tim.

"Tame coons! Well, I wish he would get up and clear these fellows out, they are a confounded nuisance. See! there come six or eight more of them," he added, impatiently.

"Better send one of the waiters up to call him," suggested Tim.

"I'll do it," said the landlord, going away.

Tim and Charley exchanged winks and retired to the piazza, where a mass of clustering vines hid them from view, although they could see and hear what was going on.

In the course of ten or fifteen minutes Smith made his appearance in the barroom, and in the best of humor.

"There's your man," said the landlord, to a group of the waiting darkeys, when he saw Smith.

A crowd of them made a rush for him, just as he had ordered his cocktail.

"Ami you Massa Smith?"

"Am you de coon boss?"

"Heah am yer coons, boss!" and a dozen other exclamations were hurled at the cross and thoroughly astonished Smith.

"Heah am de finest tame coon in Vicksburg, Massa Smith," said the darkey who had his coon in his hat.

"What the devil—" Smith began.

"Bet you ten thousand dollar dat he can't beat my coon," interposed another, elbowing his way into the circle that had by this time completely surrounded Smith.

"Go way, fool nigger! Whar you get ten thousand dollar? Can't raise ten cents!" sneered the other.

"Bet I raise mo' money dan you can."

"Guess yer hab ter sell yer coon fust."

"Go way, brack man, gib a gemman a chance," interposed another. "Heah you are, boss, der finest tame coon in Vicksburg," he added, addressing the bewildered clown.

Before Smith could get a chance the barroom was full of anxious darkeys, who crowded and fought for a chance to get near enough to him to expose their coons.

"Shut up, all of you!" he finally roared. "What the devil do you want any way?"

"Want fo' ter sell yer a tame coon," said eight or ten at the same time.

"Yah, on yer advertisement in dis yer mornin's *Herald*," roared another.

"Oh, go to the deuce, all of you!" said Smith, trying to work his way out of the crowd.

"Jus' look at dis yer beauty, boss."

"How 'bout dis yer coon, massa?"

"Heah am der bes' train coon in der world."

"Heah, boss, see how fat dis one am," and dozens of other shouts saluted his ears.

"Stand back, I tell you!" roared Smith.

"Yes, stan' back dar, you onmannerly nigs, an' luf an ole woman hab a show," cried an old aunty, crowding towards him with a pair of coons in a basket.

"What is the meaning of this?" Smith demanded of the barkeeper.

"Didn't you advertise in this morning's *Herald* for tame coons?" asked the man.

"Not by a jammed sight. Who said I did?"

"Well, there is such an advertisement, and those fellows have all seen it."

"Oh, thunder! What do I want of tame coons I'd like to know?"

"Of course I don't know what you want of them, neither do these people, but here they are."

Smith turned towards them again, but the noise and jabber was so loud that he could scarcely hear himself.

"Go away, I tell you, I do not want any coons," he finally managed to say.

"How—how dat?" demanded several.

"Because I don't, that's how."

"What fo' you advertise, den?"

"Yah, how dat?" asked a dozen.

"I never advertised for such a thing in my life, tell you."

A wild yell of disappointment and disgust greeted this announcement, and at least a dozen papers were thrust in his face, with the question: "How dat?" accompanying them.

Smith could not avoid looking at one which was thrust under his nose. In fact, he concluded that it was best to do so, for that crowd was beginning to look and act ugly.

"Boys, it is a sell."

"Sell! Don't sell many coons, I guess."

"Sell who—sell what?"

"Who dar—who gwine ter get fooled? Guess 'tain't me, boss," said one big fellow, handing his coon to a friend, and trying to elbow his way to where Smith stood, for the evident purpose of putting a head on him.

"Hold on, there!" shouted the barkeeper, "keep back, or I'll have you in the lockup in less than ten minutes."

This quieted them for the moment, and Smith again attempted to escape.

"Somebody put that advertisement in for a joke," said he.

"Joke!" yelled a dozen.

"Joke on who, I'd like to know?"

"Joke on me."

"Joke on de debil! How dat?"

"It was intended doubtless for a joke on me, but I am very sorry for you, although you can't blame me," said Smith, soothingly.

"Sorry! How sorry be ye, boss?" asked one of them, savagely.

"How we gwine ter go to the circus?"

A bright idea struck Smith.

"Well, boys, it is a sell for which I am not to blame, but take a drink at my expense, and I'll give you each a ticket to the circus for the evening's show, and call it square."

A wild cheer that was almost deafening immediately greeted the proposition, and at once the darkeys began to crowd up in front of the bar and order their drinks. Such a scene of excitement and confusion was never seen before. Those who could not yet get to the bar were singing and dancin' in the most delighted manner, and it was utterly impossible either to control or quiet them.

Mr. Lent, the proprietor of the show, came in just at this point, and Smith flew to him.

"Give me a hundred complimentary tickets, for Heaven's sake," said he, quickly, while the perspiration poured down his face.

"A hundred complimentary tickets! What for?" demanded Mr. Lent, greatly astonished.

"I have got into the devil's own scrape here with these darkeys, and the only way I can get out of it is to treat them and give them a ticket to the show," replied Smith.

"How have you got into a scrape with them?"

Thereupon Smith proceeded to explain the matter to his astonished employer, at the same time hinting

that the job was most likely put up by either Tim or English Charley.

"More practical joking, eh? I told you when you played that last snap on Tim that you'd be sure to get it back again, and I guess you'll find you have. Well, here are the tickets," he added, producing a bundle of them. "But I shall have to charge them to you."

"What!"

"Why, what do you expect—that I can afford to give away a hundred tickets in a town like this?"

"But just think of the snap I am in."

"Oh, yes, I might give away a thousand tickets and help the whole town out. No; if you only wanted a dozen or so I would give them to you with pleasure, but a hundred—no, no!"

"Of course everything is all right. Why shouldn't it be? What is your poison?"

"Oh, I'll get square with you duffers yet."

"Square?" asked both Tim and Charley.

"Oh, you know well enough what I mean."

"We do?" and then turning away from him they held a little pantomime between themselves in which they acted out that Smith was all broken up and probably gone in the head.

"Coons! How does that strike you?"

"Coons!" and again they exchanged wild but anxious looks, as though now fully convinced that he was off his nut.

"Advertisement—tame boons—call at this hotel—ask for Smith! Oh, it was a pretty good joke, but I'll play one worth two of it."

"Tim, I'll strangle you!"

"Oh! he is getting bad. Let's go."

"You chaps know all about it."

"About what—your case?"

"That advertisement—those coons."

Tim and Charley again exchanged knowing glances, and then, as though anxious to ignore him and put an end to a mystifying conversation, they ordered their drinks and left him severely alone. But this was too much for Smith. He could stand a practical joke better than he could stand before a bar and see his friends drink without asking him to join in.

"I say," he said, insinuatingly.

They both looked at him in surprise.

"Well?"

"Well?"



"Yes, stan' back dar, you onmannerly nigs, an' luf an ole woman hab a show," cried an old aunty, crowding towards him with a pair of coons in a basket.

"Confound the luck! I'll kill those fellows if they don't let me alone," he growled.

"Probably they would do so if you set them the example by not molesting them. I must say my sympathy is with them, for you are older and should know better."

With as much grace as he could command under the circumstances, he took the tickets and began to distribute them to the waiting, anxious crowd, that had by this time put down about ten dollars' worth of liquors at his expense.

Not a few of them got two apiece by putting the first one they received out of sight, and then pretending not to have any. At all events, the whole one hundred tickets were given away, and most likely they would have kept on demanding more had there been more to demand.

But as fast as they could be got rid of they were hustled into the street, and went away with their coons, as happy a lot of darkeys as ever was seen anywhere. At length Smith was relieved, and had a chance to drink his soda, and if ever a man needed something to brace himself up with it was poor Smith, for he was sick enough to call a doctor.

Tim and English Charley sauntered into the bar-room about this time, looking as fresh and innocent as two little lambs.

"Halloo, Smitty!" said they both, as they sauntered in.

Smith looked savagely at them without speaking, but of which they appeared not to take notice.

"What'll you have to drink, old man?" asked Tim, cheerfully.

But still Smith looked at them without uttering a word or moving a muscle.

"What's the matter with you, dear boy?" asked English Charley, looking at him inquiringly.

"That's all right, my lads," he finally said.

"What's all right?" asked Tim.

"Oh, poor fellow! He is all broken up!" said Tim, mournfully.

"All gone to pieces!"

"Oh, my head is all right, and you had better both spit on your hands and take a fresh grip so that you don't forget it."

"Too bad—too bad!" sighed Tim.

"You really must stop drinking so much, Smith, for you are off your cabase half of the time lately. What do you mean about coons?"

"That's all right. The laugh is on me now, but wait and see who the yell will be on by and by."

"Pshaw! Barkeeper, you are not doing exactly the horizontal thing in allowing this man to drink so much. He is getting worse and worse every day, and presently we shall have to leave him behind," said Charley, at the same time giving the man a wink that fully posted him.

"Well, the gentleman hasn't drank much of anything here," said the barkeeper.

"Oh, he's so badly shattered that it only takes a few glasses to upset him," said Tim.

"You go west?" growled Smith.

"I did ask you to drink, but I take it all back now. You have had too much already."

"I should shout that he has had altogether too much this morning," said the barkeeper.

"That's what I thought."

"Too much coon!" said Smith.

"There is that coon again. I tell you he is fast going to pieces."

"Well, you ought to have been here a few minutes ago and you would have thought that he had too much coon," said the barkeeper.

"Oh, it isn't the first time he has had these attacks."

"What, of coon?"

"Well, there are different names for it, but the most expressive one is snakes in the boots," said Tim.

"Am I in?"

"I should say you were, about deep enough."

"Am I in this?" he asked, pointing to the drinks which had been set up for the pair.

"Do you think you can carry another?"

"Bah! what's the matter?"

"Nothing; what's the matter with you?"

"I want something."

"Oh, you do, eh? Well, that sounds like his normal condition," said Charley, "and I guess he is all right yet. What'll you have?"

"A segar, barkeeper. But, I say, that was a devil of a racket, boys."

"What?"

"Those coons," said he, laughing.

"He isn't exactly right," whispered Tim.

"Got coon on the brain."

Just then Mr. Lent came in.

"Halloo, Smith: how's coons?" he asked, which seemed to astonish the two jokers more than ever.

"All gone, Mr. Lent. Now wasn't that the meanest thing you ever knew?"

"It was one of the funniest things that I ever heard. Did you see it, boys?" he asked, addressing Tim and Charley.

"Oh, trust those duffers! They know all about it," said Smith.

"He has been talking about coons since we came into the room, but as yet we have not been able to make out his meaning."

"No, we thought he had the James-Jams," said Tim.

"Well, if you don't know about it I will tell you, for it is too good a thing to be lost."

"Please do, for I am all anxiety."

Thereupon Mr. Lent proceeded to tell the story and to describe the situation as it was when he found the unfortunate clown quite surrounded with belligerent darkeys, each with one or more tame coons.

Although both Tim and Charley had seen the same thing, they laughed over it just as naturally as though it had been entirely new to them, and their acting was so good that Smith began to be deceived. From the first he had made up his mind that either Tim or English Charley put up the job, that is, provided they didn't do it together, but this acting by both almost threw him off his scent, and he began to cast about in his mind for some one else to suspect.

"The best thing of the kind I ever heard in my life," said English Charley. "But if I mistake not somebody once played the same racket on you before, only dogs were substituted for coons."

"Yes, that was Tim."

"Are you sure of it?" asked that individual.

"Well, not any more so than I am that you also put up this job."

"Then don't be so fresh, old man."

"It serves you right, Smith, whoever did the job, for you are always playing some snap or other on people, and I like to see you get a taste back once in awhile," said Lent.

"Well, see if I don't find out who it was and get square with them," said he.

The laugh continued for some time longer, and when Smith went in to get his breakfast, Mr. Lent, thinking it would be a good advertisement, gave the full particulars to the city editor of an afternoon paper, and before the performance commenced that evening, the story, instead of being known only to a few, was known to everybody in the city.

And a good advertisement it turned out to be, for the tent was crowded, and a wild yell of "coons!" greeted Smith the moment he put in an appearance. But no one in that vast crowd shouted louder or gave him a more laughing reception than did each darkey who received a complimentary ticket from him.

CHAPTER XXV.

ABOUT the next point of any particular interest visited by Lent's Circus and Menagerie was Memphis, Tenn., where they were billed to show two nights and one afternoon.

Since the tame coon racket which Tumbling Tim had played on Smith at Vicksburg, there had nothing happened in that line worthy of note, possibly because Smith could not make sure who put up the sell on him, and partially because Tim considered himself pretty nearly square with him.

For a long time, however, Smith felt too "sick" to think of playing any practical joke on anybody, although the hope still animated his breast that he should some day get a chance to make everything even with everybody, and perhaps remain a little ahead.

But in his mind he had two individuals with whom he wanted to play a trick that would astonish them for the remainder of their lives, and they were Tim and English Charley, although what he had learned from experience made him exceedingly cautious and firmly determined to keep every detail to himself; that is, when he should chance to have any to keep.

Memphis is a first-rate "show town," and almost anything that shows up there is sure of a good audience.

This is perhaps owing, in a great degree, to the large number of well-to-do negroes who reside there, to say nothing of the other classes, and they are great patrons of all sorts of amusements, especially circuses.

There are probably more good-looking colored people in Memphis than in any city of the south, and a person can there meet with a larger number of "dandy darks" and more "fancy colored belles" than almost any other city in the world.

On the first evening there was a perfect jam, and fully two-thirds of the audience was composed of different shades of colored people; and when it came Tim's turn to do his act with the educated mule, in response to the clown's challenge, which no one seemed anxious to take up, he bounced into the ring, dressed as a fancy colored girl, got up regardless of expense.

His advent was hailed with a perfect storm of applause, for no one thought for a moment that a female, black or white, would attempt to ride a mule with such a reputation.

And it so happened that there was an old negro wench in the audience who thought she recognized Tim in his female disguise as her daughter, and rising up in her seat she called to her:

"You, Nance, you come right out ob dat now! Wanter disgrace your ole mudder showin' off on dat yer mule? Come right out ob dat. You heah me?"

Tim tumbled to it in an instant, and turning towards her, he exclaimed:

"Dat's all right, mudder; I'se gwine fo' ter capter dat fifty dollars."

This provoked more laughter and excitement.

"Come right outen dat, I say!" yelled the old woman.

"Can't do it, mudder; I'se gwine ter take home dat fifty, shuah," said Tim.

"Great big fool wench, wha' you know 'bout ridin' a mule?"

"Oh, jus' watch me, ole gal," he replied, turning away.

"I sha'n't do it; I won't be disgraced a-seein' my daughter a-floppin' aroun' on a mule afo' folks, an' if yer disorber me, I'll nigh unto skin yer alive when yer get home!"

"Sit down!"

"Shut up!"

"Go ahead with the fun!" and hundreds of other exclamations now arose from all parts of the tent, and somebody sitting near the old woman, pulled her down into her seat.

It was one of the biggest hits that Tim had ever made in the mule business, this having an old wench mistake him for her daughter, for probably there were not a dozen people in the house who did not believe it to be a genuine affair.

Fred Smith himself was somewhat in doubt, although he finally recognized Tim's voice, and then he addressed him:

"Well, young lady, do you feel as though you were competent to ride this fiery, untamed steed?" he asked, approaching him.

"Yes, boss; I think I kin git away wid dat yer animile if yer gibbs me the fifty dollars."

"Oh, certainly, we always keep our promises, and I think you will be able to get away with the animal—always provided that the animal don't get away with you," and with a little mugging, Smith managed to get a laugh.

"Boss, I takes my chances on dat lay."

"You, Nance, you heah me?" came again from the excited mother; but she was soon snuffed out by those in her vicinity, who were anxious to see the sport.

"All right; let us see your agility," said Smith, leading up the mule.

"You, Nance, don't ye do it!" the old woman fairly screamed, but once more she was howled into silence.

"Fotch along you' animile," said Tim.

"He is already fotched, fair equestrienne."

"Don't call me a name like dat, fo' I'd hab you know dat I'm a 'spectable gal an' I won't stan' it!" said Tim, savagely, and again did the people laugh.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, miss," replied Smith, grimacing to the audience.

Taking the bridle in his left hand, Tim threw himself astride of the mule. This, of course, provoked a perfect hurrah of laughter, and to help it along, the supposed mother of the eccentric and daring wench arose in her seat, and flourishing a big umbrella, fairly shrieked her disgust and opposition.

Tim was enjoying the fun full as much as any of them, and he determined to carry it out full length and make as much of it as he and the mule could agree upon, there being, as usual, a perfect understanding between them.

First the mule began to go backwards, while Tim was banging his ribs with his legs (displaying striped stockings clear to his knee and any quantity of white "washing") and urging him to go the other way, the spectators meanwhile nearly bursting with laughter.

Then he turned and ran furiously for a couple of rods, then stopping suddenly, the supposed girl was thrown over his head, and throwing a flip-flap, he landed about a rod ahead of the mule in a sadly demoralized condition so far as clothes and body was concerned.

Quickly righting himself in a sliding posture in the sawdust, he provoked the raging laughter still further by an awkward scramble to put down his clothes, while the old woman up in the audience was screaming quite loud enough to be heard above the hurrah.

Smith, with a show of gallantry, ran to assist him to his feet.

"Go 'way dar!" cried Tim, affecting a maiden wench's modesty, "don't come neah me, fo' I'se snah dat I bust something. Go 'way, Mr. Clown, go 'way!"

He finally gathered himself up, shook the dust from his clothing in an awkward way, and then approached the mule again, who stood in his tracks, looking as honest as a clam.

"Got enough?" asked Smith.

"No, not half," bawled Tim, imitating the indignant voice of a female.

"Bully for you, Nance!"

"Go it, ole gal!"

"Three cheers for Nance!" and other shouts were heard during the delivery of the cheers which were given with a vim.

"All right," said Smith, who was feeling in good-humor that night in spite of the fact that Tim was getting the most of the applause. "Come right along and help yourself."

Again did Tim bound astride the mule, and this time he hugged his legs around the animal's body and his arms around his neck.

"Now let's see yer go on wid any mo ob you foolin'! go lang!" he cried.

The mule knowing his business at once responded, and after walking a few yards, deliberately knelt down and rolled over in the sawdust, creating wilder laughter and worse demoralization if possible than before.

Gathering himself up, he again jumped upon the animal, at the same time whispering some understood words between them, but of course unobserved to the audience, and announced that he was ready for another trial.

Cheered by the spectators, he again spoke to the mule, who began to canter up and down, without, however, going ahead a foot, which of course created renewed laughter and any number of exclamations from the audience, thoroughly alive to the sport.

But while the laughter was at its height, the mule suddenly took a start and began to shoot ahead around the track.

Laughter quickly changed to cheering, which grew louder and louder as the ride progressed, and finally wound up with three cheers as the ride was finished. Even the old woman was hushed to silence as she comprehended the fact that her daughter had won the reward of fifty dollars.

"Now, dar, whar dat money?" asked Tim, confronting the clown.

"Go right out into the tent and our treasurer will hand it to you."

Bowing to the still cheering audience Tim retired to the dressing tent, and his part of the show was over. But so nicely had it been carried out that not one of

the spectators believed but that it was genuine, and complimented the wench on her spunk.

The old woman who had made such a fuss about her supposed daughter going in to make a show of herself, now began to fidget about in her seat and to manifest considerable anxiety regarding her daughter and the money.

It was evidently a terrible struggle with the old gal, whether to remain and see the remainder of the show that her heart was so much set upon, or go in search of that moneyed daughter of hers.

But the circus part of the show was scarcely over, when she made her way into the ring and followed the last of the performers out into the dressing tent, where, to her, all was confusion worse confounded; and in less than no time she became lost, bewildered and decidedly panicky among so many horses and gayly caparisoned men.

"Nance! Nance!" she finally began to yell, and Tim, who was in his proper costume by this time, recognized the voice and approached to where she stood, striking wildly right and left with her big folded umbrella to keep away the horses.

"Halloo, aunty, what's the matter?" asked Tim, good-naturedly.

"Whar am my Nance? Whar am de chile ob my buzzum, dat rode de mule an' win dat fifty dollar?"

"Oh! the exquisite colored young lady who conquered our educated mule?"

"To be sartin; she am de hansumest gal in Memphis, if I say so, an' she lub her old mudder almost ter def. Whar am she?"

"She has received her money and gone away in company with a likely-looking young buck, and I guess they have gone on a spree."

"Bress Moses an' de lamb! Am you shoo ob dat, sonny?"

"Very sure, aunty."

"I—I jus' skin dat wench alive. I will, fo' shuah! I bet she hab gone off wid dat yaller coon, Jim Jumper, an' dey spen' 'bout half dat money afo' I get my han's on it, de misable wench! But I'll fin' 'em, an' de way I will warm dat gal fo' disobedience will make her wish dat she neber been bon'!" and she began to fly around like a crazy person.

"Keep cool, aunty."

Show me der way outer heah an' I bet you dat I keep cool," said she, savagely.

"This way out," replied Tim, showing her the way out upon the street.

And what a laugh they had as the deluded old gal darted out of the place, for it was laughable enough to think of her rushing around to the various saloons and resorts in quest of her daughter with the supposed wealth, and then, of course, not finding her, returning home to encounter her, a-bed, and perchance, asleep, and there demanding what she had done with that fifty dollars.

And just imagine the sensations of that girl, not having been to the show at all, most likely, and the wrangle which followed, and the poor likelihood of making her believe that she had not been out of the house.

No knowing but that all which they imagined really did take place, and the probability of its being so was food enough to provoke laughter in the company for some time afterwards. And such was one of the many humorous episodes which greet the showman, and especially if he happens to be connected with a circus troupe.

On the following night Tim had no occasion to appear to insure a good send off for his part of the business, for the story of how that young molasses colored wench had succeeded in carrying off the reward, set half the coons of both sexes crazy, and the result was that when Smith offered the challenge there were fully a dozen men and women rushed to the front, and began to wrangle as to who was first, and therefore entitled to the first chance at that educated mule.

This was one of the most grotesquely comical exhibitions ever witnessed, and the audience fairly screamed with laughter. It required the united efforts of Smith and the ring-master to select three candidates and make the others sit down.

Of course the reader has no occasion to be told that each one of the three who were eventually allowed to try their luck got all they wanted, excepting the fifty dollars. They furnished nearly half an hour's fun for the spectators, and finally retired all broken up and not a cent richer than before.

Well, let us turn from these incidental comicalities and see a racket that Smith had finally worked out in his mind to be played upon English Charley. He did not really originate the thing himself, but making the acquaintance of one of the city marshals, who proved to be a very convivial cuss like himself, and quite as fond of playing jokes as he was, they somehow worked the affair up between them.

In order to rightly understand the matter, it must be borne in mind that there is a municipal law in Memphis requiring everybody who delivers a lecture there on any but a religious subject to procure a license; and failing to do so, they are liable to both fine and imprisonment.

Well, Smith and the marshal happened to hit upon the idea that English Charley's line of business in connection with the menagerie came under the head of lecturing, and after talking the matter over between themselves for awhile, it was agreed that a bogus warrant should be gotten up from a regular official blank, and that the marshal should arrest him for lecturing in Memphis without a license.

The marshal had no trouble at all in obtaining the blank, and then he proceeded to fill it up in such a way as to make it look perfectly genuine to anybody but a person well acquainted with the official personages and machinery of local law.

Charley was at that moment engaged in a game of

billiards with Smith at the hotel, and the marshal, as per understanding, put in an appearance when the first game was about half finished.

"This is Mr. Charles Ransome, otherwise known as English Charley, is it not?" asked the marshal, approaching firmly but respectfully. "Yes, sir," replied Charley, promptly, for he had no more idea of anything wrong or of a sell than did the man in the moon.

"The lecturer connected with Lent's menagerie?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you a license?"

"License!" exclaimed Charley.

"Yes, I am a city marshal," said he, at the same time showing his badge.

"What the deuce do you mean by a license?"

"Simply this, that every person delivering a lecture other than religious in Memphis is required to take out a license, failing in which they are liable to fine and imprisonment."

"The deuce you say!" exclaimed Charley, looking from the officer to Smith, who stood by, and appeared to be as greatly astonished as he was.

"Yes, sir, that is the law, and as you have failed to comply with it I have a warrant here for your arrest," said he, showing it to him.

"What in thunder does it mean? I never heard of such an absurdity before in my life."

"I cannot help that, sir. Law is law, and I know only my duty in the matter," said the officer.

"Well, hang me if this isn't a blooming go."

"I say, officer," put in Smith, "how about the license which Mr. Lent took out for the show—doesn't that cover everything?"

"No, sir. He took out a license for a circus and menagerie, and it does not say a word about a lecture," replied the marshal.

"Confound such a stupid bother. Where is Mr. Lent, I wonder?"

"He went to Nashville this morning."

"The deuce he did! Well, what's to be done?"

"Well, I don't know what you may do, but I am well aware of what I shall do."

"And what is that?"

"Put you under arrest and take you before the mayor this afternoon on his return from Nashville."

"But can't this be fixed somehow?" asked Smith, manifesting much interest.

"Oh, yes, you can probably fix it with the mayor," replied the marshal, calmly.

"Oh, pshaw! What a nuisance! Why didn't you go to Mr. Lent or his agent about this bloody, blooming business?" asked Charley, now beginning to lose his patience.

"Most likely because neither of them gave the lecture. But come, I have no time to waste."

"Mr. Officer, allow me to consult with him for a moment, will you, being his friend?" asked Smith.

"Oh, certainly, so long as you do not go out of my sight. You consider yourself under arrest, do you not?" he asked, addressing Charley.

"Certainly."

"Very well, then you may consult," said he, taking a seat, while Smith and Charley withdrew a few yards and held a whispered conversation.

"What am I to do?"

"Mum is the word, Charley; I have an idea."

"What is it?"

"This officer seems to be a pleasant sort of a fellow, and if I am not mistaken, he drinks like a fish. Now let us take him into the bar-room and fill his skin full, and when he gets so that he don't know his head from a bushel basket, I will take him especially in tow, and allow him to skip out—take the five o'clock train for Nashville, and that will be the end of it."

"But the show this evening?"

"Oh, that's all right. It is the last performance and it won't make any odds. I'll make it all straight; trust me."

"All right, then, let's try it," said Charley, again approaching the officer. "Well, we have concluded that the only way is to make the best of it, and remain in your custody until after the arrival of the mayor. Come, won't you have something?" he added, nodding in the direction of the bar-room.

"Well, I don't mind, seeing we have got some time on our hands," replied the marshal.

"Might as well pass it agreeably," suggested Smith, winking slyly to the officer.

"Certainly," added Charley, and he led the way into the bar-room, where he ordered a bottle of wine.

The marshal at once became very gracious, even confidential and generous. Then Charley set up another bottle, and another, and ordered the best cigars, and then some more wine. This thing he kept up for about an hour, and then the officer pretended to be drunk and careless.

Smith winked knowingly and triumphantly to the victim.

"Now is your chance," said he, in a whisper. "I'll get him off in a corner and tell him some cock and bull story, and you light out. See?"

"All right," and Smith led the seemingly drunken man away for a confab, and Charley sloped, vanished, faded away like a guilty shadow, and hailing a carriage, he was driven to the depot without loss of time, leaving his friend Smith to bring along his baggage when he came.

But he did not know that he left him behind to laugh in company with that officer and several others to whom he told the story, but such was the fact.

Truly, it was the best racket that Smith had ever played on anybody, and produced the greatest laugh. As for the marshal, he inclosed the bogus warrant in an envelope and forwarded it to Charley, at Nashville, so that he would get it about the time that the company arrived there.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON arriving at Nashville, Tenn., English Charley felt somewhat relieved, but he at once sought Mr. Lent, and told him what had happened to him, and of his arrest at Memphis, also that the company would follow the next day.

The racket that Smith and a city marshal had played on Charley will be remembered, and when he came to tell Mr. Lent about it, that gentleman at once pronounced it a sell.

"How could it be?" demanded Charley.

"How could it be! Charley, I am struck dumb with your greenness," said Mr. Lent.

"Hang me if I can see it," mused Charley.

"You, an old showman!"

"Well?"

"Well, I tell you my license covers everything, of course, as it always does. Why, there isn't hardly a place that we ever showed at that there isn't a license required for lecturing, and I never heard of such a thing as separate licenses being required for the different parts of my show. Why, they might just as well demand a license for my cannon-ball tosser, for his feats of strength and jugglery, as for you."

"But, I tell you, I saw the warrant on which the marshal arrested me."

"Well, what of that?"

"Wasn't that sufficient proof?"

"Sufficient proof to me that somebody made you the victim of a joke."

"I can't believe it."

"No; because it was worked so nicely that it seemed real."

"Well, what would you have done had you been in my place?"

"Played a high trump, and made them show what they could do."

"How?" asked Charley, thoughtfully.

"Why, I would have said: 'All right, old man; I don't drink this sort of tea. So take me before the mayor, and show up.'"

"Well, that's what I did, only it so happened that the mayor was out of town, and would not be back till late in the evening."

"Now that convinces me that it was a sell," said Mr. Lent, laughing.

"How does it?"

"Because the mayor was not out of town. I saw him only a few moments before I left Memphis in the morning, and he told me that he had not only been too busy to attend the show, but that he should be busy today signing documents, and if he had had any notion of leaving for Nashville, he would undoubtedly have said so, for we are old friends."

"Is that so?" mused Charley.

"That is so, and I'll bet you a good supper, with the regular 'string beans,' that the whole thing was a put-up job."

"Who by, think?"

"Well, Smith and that marshal, I suspect."

"Why do you suspect them?"

"One reason why I suspect them is that I saw Smith in company with a man who tallies with the description you give of the man who served the warrant. He introduced him to me as Mr. Somebody-or-other, and we had a drink together."

"The devil you say!"

Mr. Lent laughed and nodded.

"The devilish sly cuss! And there he was looking sad and interested in my misfortune, even going so far as to advise me what to do."

"Of course."

"Didn't appear to know the man from an apple-core all the while."

"To be sure. And didn't he suggest that you get him drunk?"

"Yes."

"And did any of his money help do it?"

"Not a bit."

"Of course not. You paid all the bills and got them both full of good tippie; probably set up the best cigars."

"Yes, twenty-five cents apiece."

"And Smith was all the while capping in, and finally got him into a corner to buzz him, and allowed you to escape."

"Yes, that is how it was," said Charley, sadly.

"Now don't you see the racket?"

"Well, it certainly looks like one."

"Because it is one, and a first-class one, too. Smith never had the brains to work it all alone, and they probably managed the thing together. Ha-ha-ha! and they all got what they wanted to drink and smoke out of you, and you skipped the town, thinking you had played a sharp trick on him, when in reality that was what they wanted, and they stayed behind to laugh at your expense. Well, that is the best thing I ever heard in my life."

"But how about the warrant?"

"It was most likely a bogus one. In fact, I know it must have been. Don't you see how easy a thing it would have been for him to obtain a printed blank and fill it out with bogus names, knowing that you would not know whether they were genuine or not?" and again he laughed.

"It is barely possible," mused Charley.

"Barely! Want to bet that it isn't?"

"No, I'm afraid I should lose, and I think I have lost enough on this racket as it stands. Fifty dollars won't save me."

"All right. Charge it to Smith," replied Mr. Lent, laughing.

"Oh, yes. I'll charge it to him, you bet," said Charley, with grim vehemence.

"Well, the least you can do is to credit him with one, for you know that you have been playing practical jokes on him ever since you have been together in the company, and if there is a redeeming feature about

such things, it is the fact that they sometimes go around, and the jokers get as good as they give."

This wasn't much consolation to Charley, who now understood that he had been made the victim of a sell, such as he had never yet succeeded in playing upon any one else, and he felt slightly sick.

He expected that every member of the company knew of it by this time, for Smith wasn't the sort of a fellow to keep such things to himself, and on their arrival at Nashville he felt sure that they would rig him most unmercifully.

And right he was, for the moment any of the company met him, whether singly or in groups, they gave him the grand laugh and chaffed him in all sorts of ways.

And to add to the fun, he received the "warrant" by mail, and Bob Stickney suggested that he have it framed and hung up in his dressing-room, so that he would never be in want of something to laugh at.

"It was a bully racket," said Tim, "and I don't blame the boys for laughing at it."

"Neither do I. Laugh and be merry, for I own up; I chip in the corn," replied Charley, who was philosopher enough to know that the easiest way to get clear of the rigging and the laughter was to take it good-naturedly.

Smith was convulsed when they met. He had been all the way from a broad grin to a war-whoop over the matter, and now it broke out again so violently that he was in danger of splitting the top of his head off, or rupturing himself.

"Go it, old man!" said Charley, good-humoredly. "Have your laugh out, for it won't last a great while."

"Well, it's devilish good while it does last," replied Smith, between his paroxysms of laughter.

"Yes, you do seem to enjoy it."

"The biggest racket that ever was played, and don't you forget it."

"I won't, and what is more, I will try to return the compliment some time."

"Oh, but you can't beat it."

"Perhaps not, but I can try."

"All right," and with this they parted.

But the laugh was kept upon Charley for a long time in spite of the good-natured way in which he took it; yet of course it gradually died away to a grin, and from that died out entirely.

The first night's performance at Nashville was all that could be desired, both by the public and the company, although, come to think of it, there was one person who attended it and went away most likely dissatisfied.

That individual was a very fresh young fellow, who accompanied his girl, and took great pains to entertain her, especially in the menagerie part of the show, where he made himself very conspicuous and bold by stirring up the animals with his cane. He appeared to take delight in frightening his girl, and the more she protested against his daring deeds (very daring, of course, since the animals were in their cages and could not get at him if they wanted to), and tried to get him away, the bolder he became with his cane.

Finally, after stirring up all the other animals for inspection, he led his girl to the old elephant, Romeo, and began to indicate his remarkable points by touching them with his cane.

"Oh, Dolphie, don't! He might hook you," said she, in evident alarm.

"Nonsense, Birdie. Old Romeo is as gentle as a lamb. Look at his trunk," said he, rapping it smartly with his cane. "Almost as big as a Saratoga trunk, isn't it?"

"Oh, Dolphie, how very funny you are!"

"Wonder if he gets his trunk checked when he travels on the cars?" and unable to stand this new bubble of his own wit, he threw back his head and laughed loudly, while those who stood around regarded him with a sneer and passed remarks about his freshness.

Contrary to his expectations, his wonderful wit did not create a laugh among the spectators, and he resolved to put that trunk joke in another way; so, tickling the end of Romeo's proboscis with his stick, he said:

"I say, old man, do you have to get your trunk checked when you travel?"

It wasn't checked just then.

Swinging it suddenly towards Mr. Fresh, who stood near at hand, he caught him around the waist, and after swinging him around above his head three or four times, he gave him a ding over the heads of the people, and the poor devil fell on top of the monkey cage, and they set up a chattering and shrieking, nearly drowning the shrieks of his frightened girl.

Mr. Fresh was more frightened than hurt, although he had enough of the latter to make him hobble when taken down, and hooking on to his terrified girl, he slunk out of that show a sadder and a wiser man.

The probability is that it knocked some of the freshness and conceit out of him, and that he has never since then tried his wit or applied his cane on an elephant.

As before stated, the first night at Nashville was all that could be wished, but the second night was destined to produce a little excitement for at least one of that circus company.

Tumbling Tim was the originator of this, as he was of so many other sensations and rackets, and this is how it came about.

It so happened that Nashville was overcrowded with visitors at the time, and several of the company were obliged to take up with whatever accommodations they could get, although Smith, Charley, Stickney and Tim were quartered in a hotel some ways from the center of the city, which was undergoing some sort of repairs, although there were rooms enough on the first floor to accommodate these.

That night after the performance, and after Smith had retired to his room, being tired and sleepy, and

full of "bug juice" as usual, Tim unfolded his racket to English Charley.

"I say, Charley, do you want to get good and hunk with Smith?" he asked.

"Do I! Do I want to have a fortune left to me, my dear boy?" asked Charley.

"Of course. So do I."

"What do you mean?"

"I've thought of a snap that I think we might work on him to-night."

"Good! What is it?" he asked, eagerly.

"You'll brace up to it?"

"Will I! Did you ever know me to weaken? Show me a way to get hunk with that duffer and I'll work it all alone, if possible."

"No; it will take at least two. The lordlord isn't here to-night—there is nobody in the hotel but us four and a few servants. So there is a splendid show for working it."

"That's so, perhaps; but what is it?"

"The racket?"

"Yes; tell me about it."

"All right."

And he did tell him, after which they posted Stickney so that he would neither give it away nor get frightened.

"That's a good snap, fellows; and I will do all I can to help it through. But hadn't you better let one or more of the servants into the secret?" said Stickney.

"I've got one of them already, and he says to go ahead if we want to and won't do any damage," said Tim.

"But are you sure you will not?"

"Dead sure. The thing can be worked without the slightest danger to the house."

"All right; go ahead."

It was then past midnight, and Smith was snoring like a coffee-mill, all unconscious of what was in store for him.

The painters were at work in the building, and several pots of their material were setting around, and quite a pile of planed boards lay stacked up on one side of the entry.

The first thing they did was to take some of those boards and cover the stairs over with them in such a way that there remained only a narrow passage on the side next to the baluster, and then Tim took a pot of green paint, and with a brush gave the boards a good thick coat—in fact, a slushing coat.

This being completed from top to bottom, they next proceeded carefully to collect a lot of old rags, and anything that would smolder and make considerable smoke without showing much fire, and to pile them together at the far end of the entry.

The servant who had consented to the joke being played, stood ready with the gong to give the alarm, and all being in readiness, Tim was about to light the rags, when Stickney, who was watching things, suggested that it would be much safer and better to place the combustibles in some sort of a kettle, so as to make sure that nothing would be damaged.

This suggestion was at once acted upon, and the rags placed in a big brass kettle that the servant brought from the kitchen, and then all was in readiness.

Tim struck a match and lighted the rubbish, but it took a few moments to get it to burning much. When it did get going, however, it quickly filled the entry with smoke, and then the servant began to pound on the gong, making noise enough to waken the dead almost, while the others shouted fire close to Smith's room door.

"Fire—fire!" yelled Tim, pounding upon the door.

"Smith—Smith! Get up and save yourself!"

"Ha—ho—hello! What's the matter?" they heard him ask; and after shouting fire and pounding the gong some more, they retired so as not to be seen.

But it scarcely required a vocal answer to Smith's question to inform him what the matter was, for the smoke was by this time pouring in over the transom of his door, and being even more afraid than people usually are of fire, he tumbled out of bed, slipped on his stockings and drawers, and then hastily seizing his trunk and the remainder of his clothing, he bundled them together under his arm, and made for the door.

"Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! we're all burning up! Fire! I wonder where the stairs are?"

Groping his way along through the blinding smoke, frightened nearly to death, he reached the head of the stairs.

The next instant he shot from top to bottom, as though fired from a gun, and he landed at the bottom in a completely demoralized condition.

But gathering himself just as a convenient pail of water was thrown upon the smoldering fire, he rushed into the street, intending to keep on yelling fire with all his might.

But on the front piazza he encountered Tim and English Charley, who were laughing so loud that even had he shouted it would not have been heard.

He stopped short and looked at them in surprise.

"What the devil are you duffers laughing at? don't you know the hotel is on fire?" he demanded, angrily.

"No; is it, though?" asked Charley.

"Actually on fire?" added Tim.

"Certainly. Don't you see the smoke?"

"Oh, that's only somebody smoking a bad cigar; probably one that you gave them."

"What the devil do you mean?" asked Smith, looking from one to the other.

"What's the row here?" demanded a police officer, coming upon the scene just in time to meet the servant who had been in the job.

"Nothing, only a few old rags got a-fire," the servant replied, perfectly cool.

"All out?"

"Oh, yes, no further damage."

"All right;" and the officer continued along his beat.

As the servant came down-stairs after Smith, he quieted the fears of everybody in the house, and Bob Stickney followed close behind, both to escape the smoke and to enjoy the laugh at Smith's expense.

The laugh was going on when they reached the piazza where he was, and poor Smith, utterly and wholly confounded and confused, stood looking at them, still grasping his small leather trunk in his left hand, while holding his clothes in a bundle under his other arm.

It was a most comical situation, and Smith, as he stood there in his drawers and stocking feet, completely smeared with green paint, was really a fit subject to laugh at.

"What is the meaning of this?" he finally managed to ask, between the shouts of laughter.

"Did you see him go down those stairs?" asked Stickney, nearly bursting.

"Did we?"

"Did you see him land like a lobster all in a heap at the bottom?" asked Charley.

"But the fire?" said Smith.

"Did you ever see a man get up and git as he did?" and again everybody who stood around joined in the laugh.

"But how about the fire?" he asked again.

"Did you see anything green, Smith?"

"No, why?"

"Well, you certainly struck something very green. Look at yourself," said Tim.

Smith couldn't look behind him very well, even had it been light enough to do so, but he reached around and felt.

"What the devil is that?" he asked, going into the bar-room to obtain the assistance of a light.

The others followed, laughing.

"Green! I should say so. What the devil does this all mean, anyhow?" he asked, turning to his pals.

"How about that fire?" asked Tim, only to arouse up the laughter again.

"Is this a racket, boys?"

"No; it's a fire."

"Honest, now, how is it? Did you fellows put up this job on me?"

"I guess that makes the arrest racket square, Smithy, old man," said Charley.

"Thunder and blazes! Then it's all a sell, eh? Well, it's a cussed mean one, that's all I can say!" said he sharply.

"Why is it?" asked Stickney.

"Because you put my life in danger, and I am all bruised and knocked up. And look at my clothing."

"Were there any splinters in the board?"

"Oh, go to the devil, the whole lot of you! A joke is a joke, but this is simply a brutal assault, and you see if I don't take the law on you," said he, shaking his fist at them, as he left the room.

"Law won't pull the splinters out, old man," cried Charley, after him. "Better consult your Memphis marshal. Ta—ta!"

But there came no direct reply, only a growl from Smith as he made his way back to bed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AFTER leaving the bar-room in his sad plight, Smith attempted to make his way up-stairs to his room again. But he forgot all about the painted boards down which he had shot so suddenly and unexpectedly, and in attempting to go up again, he stepped upon the inclined plane and his feet went out from under him the other way this time, and down he went upon his nose, clawing, pawing, and slamming around at a fearful rate, and cursing like a pirate.

Smith was mad then. This was the staw that broke the jackass' back, and when Tumbling Tim, English Charley, Bob Stickney, and the other witnesses of his ludicrous attempt to escape from the supposed fire, rushed out into the hallway to see what the matter was, they found him wrestling with painted boards and one or two paint-pots, his trunk and wardrobe, and terribly mixed up generally, to say nothing of the wholesale swear he was having.

"Halloo, Smithy, what's loose now?"

"The devil—the very devil is loose!" he yelled, "and I'm here to whip the sulphur stuffing right out of him!" he added, finally struggling to his feet amid a burst of laughter.

"Steady, old man, steady!"

"I tell you I can thrash the whole lot of you, or I can eat any one of you without salt or grease."

"What do you want of grease when you have plenty of paint?" asked Charley.

"You English duffer!" cried Smith, setting down his gripsack and making a bound towards Charley, "I'll simply kill you!"

"Don't," said Charley, stepping quickly aside, and at the same time putting out his foot to trip him up.

Smith wasn't long in going down. In fact, that seemed to be his whole inclination on that particular night; but seeing how wildly mad he was, they concluded to skip out and avoid him for the present.

"You had better go, you contemptible duffers!" he yelled after them when they fled laughing down the stairs. "You cowardly curs, you don't dare come out and fight me," he added, although if he had been half so anxious for a fight as he pretended to be, he might have followed them.

But he contented himself with having his jaw and swear out all alone, and finally one of the servants went to his assistance with a light and assisted him to get up-stairs.

But what a pitiable sight he was when he got where he could see himself in a mirror.

He was covered with green paint from head to

foot; his nose was bleeding, and he felt as though every square inch of his body had received a separate and special bump.

"Oh, won't I make them suffer for this! Won't I have them all arrested in the morning! Well, I guess yes. Fun is fun, but these duffers carried the thing far enough for me to get the law on them, and they may bet their lives that I will do it," he growled. "Why didn't I shoot the whole lot of them? The law would have justified me in doing it. But I'll fix them in the morning."

It was a long time, though, before he could compose himself to sleep or anything approaching it, for in the midst of his woes he could hear the loud laughing and the clink of glasses down-stairs, and knew that the gang were enjoying themselves all on his account, and this exasperated him dreadfully.

But it clenched his determination all the stronger about having them arrested and giving them a touch of the law.

It was nearly morning when everything got quiet again, although everybody in the hotel slept with a grin on his face, and English Charley actually laughed between his snores.

It was about nine o'clock when Smith awoke the next morning. He had great trouble in dressing himself, owing to the condition of his underclothing, and the first thing he did was to go out and buy more; after which he went to a police magistrate and told the terrible story of his wrongs.

This finger of law at once issued warrants for the apprehension of the jokers, which were given to an officer to serve, and although Smith was dreadfully in earnest all the while, it was really the most comical part of the whole proceeding.

News of the arrest, as well as of the cause therefor, was quickly spread, and not only the entire company belonging to the circus and menagerie flocked to the police court, but crowds of others whose curiosity was naturally excited to know what the trouble was between members of the great circus troupe.

Mr. Lent, the proprietor, was there, a trifle disgusted to think his company should be in such a scrape, all because Smith could not take a joke as well as he could give one.

English Charley, Tim, and Mr. Stickney were marched up before the magistrate, and the charges read to them, to which they pleaded not guilty, and fell back upon the lawyer whom they had engaged to defend them.

Smith told his story substantially as it was, and as recorded in the preceding chapter of these records; and do what they might, in spite of the place or the officers who tried to preserve order, this narration provoked shouts of laughter.

Then the lawyer for the defendants took Smith in hand, and put him through a course of cross-examination sprouts.

"Mr. Smith, are you yourself not exceedingly fond of playing practical jokes?" was his first question.

"Well, I like a joke as well as anybody; but a joke is a joke—"

"Exactly; and have you not played several upon different members of the company?"

"Yes; but as I said before, a joke's a joke—"

"I understand you, Mr. Smith. Now what was the latest practical joke that you played upon a member of the company?"

Smith hesitated, and as he remembered the circumstances, a broad grin gradually overspread his mobile mug.

"Please inform the court, Mr. Smith."

"Well, that was a joke, sir," said he.

"So I believe; but perhaps the court would like to hear your definition of a joke."

Smith finally went on to relate how he had put up the job in Memphis to have Charley arrested, together with all the particulars in full, at the same time appearing to enjoy it so much that his own troubles seemed forgotten.

Told as only Smith could tell it (and he took all the honor to himself), it created uproarious laughter in the court, none laughing harder than the victim himself.

"And this is not the first one you have played, by any means, is it?" asked the lawyer.

"No; nor the first one that has been played on me."

"That is to say, it is a common thing for the members of your company to play practical jokes on one another?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well; now will you be kind enough to tell the court wherein the joke that was played on you last night was any worse than the one you played at Memphis?"

"That, sir, was a joke—a first-class, high-toned, practical joke, such as one gentleman might play on another."

"You say a joke is a joke? Be good enough to draw the line between a high and a low joke, where both are practical."

"In this case the joke was dangerous."

"In what way?"

"I might have broken my leg."

"And when you sent him off on that train of cars there might have been an accident and broken his neck."

"I don't think the chances were so great."

"That chance is a thing that cannot be judged by human beings. Your honor," he added, addressing the court, "I think there needs no argument in order to enable you to understand the whole matter, and so without one I will respectfully submit the case."

In spite of his judicial dignity a smile overspread the magistrate's face, as he proceeded to decide the case. He said:

"I see no cause of action here, for if the plaintiff has one, the defendants also have one. It is simply a social case of give and take, and, however reprehensi-

ble it may be, the jokee has no right to complain any more than he would have were he the joker. My judgment is given as though Smith had proved the defendants to be the guilty parties, and which he has not yet done; and my advice to him is to either abstain from practical joking, or learn to take as good as he sends. Case dismissed and defendants discharged."

Laughter and applause greeted this announcement, and while the friends of the defendants gathered around to congratulate them, Smith sneaked out of court, about the meanest-looking and feeling man that was ever seen to do so.

But what made it worse for him, the entire transaction was published in the papers, creating a pleasant smile everywhere, and a perfect hurricane of laughter the next time he made his appearance in the ring.

There was one consolation, however, the end of his engagement with Lent's circus was very near at hand, and after that he would be clear of his persecutors and enter a new field. When this should come about, he resolved as solemnly as ever he said a prayer that he would never permit himself to try another practical joke as long as he lived.

But his motive for revenge was very strong, and if there was no redress for him, save in giving back as good as he received, he resolved to do something before quitting the company at St. Louis that should cause him to be remembered, and make him more than square with his enemies.

Yes, the season ended with a week in St. Louis, where the entire show was to be reorganized for the following season, and the tired company were glad enough to reach it, where, after the week advertised, they were to have a month's rest.

The season opened prosperously in St. Louis, and the prospect was that it would end as grandly as it had continued from the first of our hero's connection with it.

But as our old friend Smith is about to take his leave of the circus company, and our company as well, let us devote the remainder of this chapter to him and his project for getting square with his enemies.

It was while playing in St. Louis that he was overshadowed by a brilliant idea.

He jumped when it struck him, it was such a brilliant conception.

At one fell swoop he would accomplish his revenge.

The idea was so big that it almost made him round shouldered.

And it was with difficulty that he kept it all to himself.

Finally he did find it too much for him, and weakened to the ringmaster, telling him all about the wonderful sell that he had got in store for the whole company.

He had never intrusted any of his big secrets to the ringmaster before, because he was rather a sedate man, and seemed to take little or no interest in any of the many rackets that he had ever been engaged in.

But he took it into his head to do so now for some reason or other, so he said:

"Don't say a word, cully; I've got a job that will make them all sick."

"Who?" asked the ringmaster.

"The gang; I give it to you because you are about the only friend I have got in the whole lot of them, and so let you out."

"Well, that's kind of you, Smithy."

"Well, you know I never racketed you and you never put up anything on me, and so why shouldn't I be kind to you?"

"Very few people are so appreciative. But what is the trick you are going to play?"

"The day after the last night of the show I am going to invite them all to a big dinner; that is, they will be made to believe that it is to be a big one, but I'm going to have a pudding for each one stuffed with cotton; eggshells filled with cotton; raw potatoes; a fillet of beef made of stone (I can buy lots of them at the crockery stores); leather sandwiches; the whole to be washed down with vinegar put up in wine bottles; besides heaps of other things not necessary to mention. They will think it all right, seeing that I am going away, and will jump after the feed lively. But you bet they will think I have got the best of them at last. I have got everything engaged, and all is lovely."

"I congratulate you, my boy," said the ringmaster.

"All right; but don't say a word."

"Certainly not."

And he didn't; only he told Tim all about it within an hour. Then Tim's fertile brain was at once set in motion, and in less than two hours the leaders of the company knew all about Smith's proposed great sell.

"Oh, he will, eh? We'll see," said Tim, gleefully.

"Yes, indeed, we will," replied Charley.

"Well, wouldn't that be a big thing?" said Stickney, laughing.

"Just like Bill Smith; but we will see his feed and go two better."

This being the sentiment of all hands, preparations were at once made to turn the proposed seller into the party sold.

Tim was the boy to do it, and after the performance the last evening of the season, he communicated his ideas to the leaders, and, as usual, they at once approved of it as just the thing, and went to work to help carry it out.

"What are you going to do?" asked the ringmaster of Tim.

"I'll tell you what we want you to do in order to help carry out our plans. You go to Smith and tell him that the company has got wind of his racket somehow, and that he had better abandon it or he will be sure to get the worst of it; but tell him if he wants to make it a sell, anyhow, not to say anything about it, and instead of giving us a feed, he can heap coals of

fire on our heads by making us a pleasant farewell speech at the big tent to-morrow afternoon, just before he takes the cars to go east."

"All right; I'll tell him."

"Only get him to do that, and we can work the rest to the queen's taste."

With this they parted, and the ringmaster at once sought Smith, telling him just as Tim had directed.

"How, in the name of all that is devilish, did they find it out, I wonder?" asked Smith. "That knocks me all endwise!"

"But here is something you can do. Meet them in the tent to-morrow afternoon, an hour or so before you leave town, and make them a pleasant farewell speech. Don't say a word about the feed, and then they will be completely fooled—see?"

"Well, perhaps that would be a good idea," replied Smith, after a moment's reflection; "but how shall I get them together?"

"Oh, that's all right; that will work itself."

"How?"

"I'll tell you. They are expecting to have you go to the tent, and give them the invitation to the dinner, consequently they will all be there, and then you can go it."

"All right, I'll be there."

"And I'll suggest that you intend to say a few words to them before parting, while they, thinking that I know nothing about the dinner, for they have kept it from me, will think all the more of it. See?"

"Yes, all right. I'll get the best of them somehow, if possible. But it is too confounded bad that they found out about that feed."

"That's so, but perhaps it will be as well."

Well, things were all arranged, and the next day the entire company gathered in the audience tent to hear Smith's farewell speech before taking leave of the company.

Tim and the others arranged a little platform on which the speaker should stand, and this consisted of the spring-board, bent down level, and fastened underneath with a cord so as to hold it firmly in place, while an American flag was draped over it, hanging far enough down to hide the trap, and also the lad who was to spring it at a signal.

Everything was in readiness by the time Smith arrived, and the various members of both companies were on hand.

He came among them with his old and well-known gripsack in his hand, apparently all ready to start on his journey, and they received him with hearty cheers.

He was about to commence his speech, when some one called out: "Take the platform!"

"Yes, Mr. Smith, they have arranged a platform for you," said Mr. Lent, pointing to it, while the call became general for him to take it.

"All right, my friends. Since you have been to the trouble to erect one, I will certainly take it," said he, mounting it, and thinking what a sold lot of duffers he was going to address.

"Three cheers for Smith!" yelled somebody, and then everybody yelled.

"Thanks, my friends, one and all, thanks. I did not expect this honor, any more than I expected to address you on the eve of taking my leave of you, perhaps forever."

Cheers and hand clapping.

"It is indeed sad to part with friends and companions who have been associated together so long and so pleasantly as we have been. We may have had hard feelings towards each other at times, but we have also had a great deal of fun."

"Oh, yes, heaps of fun!"

"And sells!" cried another.

"Yes, we have been very much like honeybees—we have had our little sells. But if that was intended as a fling towards me, I think I can fling it back again with interest."

At this point somebody cried "fire," and a loud laugh was the result.

"Oh, that is all very well. I suppose you will have many a good laugh over that dirty trick, for such I shall always call it." (Derisive cheers.) "I did intend to say a few pleasant things at parting—"

"Intended to ask us to dinner, didn't you?" asked English Charley, at which there was another laugh.

This rather demoralized Smith and threw him from the track. But it did not fail to make him mad, and he continued, pretending not to notice it.

"With the majority of the company I part with real feelings of regret, and I shall always be pleased to hear of their success in the profession; but there are others whom I part with gladly, and trust it will be my good fortune never to meet with them again."

Tremendous cheering, during which the educated mule, who stood a short distance away, gave forth one of his loud, peculiar brays that might have been heard half a mile away, and created a perfect storm of laughter.

"Here's a tear for those who love me,
And a smile for those who hate."

Another bray from the mule followed this quotation from Byron, and it really seemed as though every member of the company would burst with laughter.

"Gentlemen, you have played your last trick on me, and I presume if the truth were known you even now feel that I have had the last snap on you."

"Oh, yes!"

"Of course!"

"That cotton dinner snap!" cried Tim, edging closer to give the signal.

"I don't understand you," said Smith.

"Oh, no!"

"Go on with the speech!"

Just then the cord holding down the spring-board was cut, and Smith and his gripsack shot up into the

air about ten feet, while the crowd roared and yelled like delighted Indians.

He picked himself up, and they laughed again.

"Oh, go to thunder!" he growled, seizing his hat and gripsack, and rushing from the tent.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SMITH never stopped to show up again, to complete his speech, or say good-bye to anybody connected with that circus troupe. He had had all he wanted, and more too, and feeling fully convinced that he hadn't a friend among them, after his involuntary experience on the spring-board, he lit out of St. Louis and started for the east, glad that his engagement had ended.

Tim and the other racketers were not half so glad as he was, for he had always been a source of amusement, and a fellow whom they could pump any amount of fun out of.

He had always been the first to play practical jokes on others, but up to the very last they had been played back on him with compound interest.

But here they were at the end of a long season in St. Louis, where they were to remain for a month for the purpose of reorganizing the company, buying new stock, and having a general overhauling and repairing before starting out upon the road again.

Of course the reader understands by this time that our friend, Tumbling Tim, was to take Smith's place as clown during the coming season, he having performed the character satisfactorily several times, and the friendless, almost nameless lad who begged his way into the profession but little more than a year before, now stood almost at the head of it, as first clown to a first-class circus.

During the vacation Tim made up his mind to visit New York, as there were several articles of dress he wished to get, besides seeing his old chums from whom he had been parted so long.

Several other members of the company went after him. In fact, nearly all of them scattered in one direction or another, some having finished their engagements with Mr. Lent and not renewed them, while others went to visit friends.

To tell the truth, Tim felt a trifle home-sick, although, strictly speaking, he had no home; yet New York and Brooklyn seemed more like home to him than any other places he had ever seen, and since leaving he had seen a great many of them, as the reader knows; and so, with a pocketful of money he started east, only two days after Smith had gone.

English Charley started with him for the purpose of making a visit, as he had many friends and relations in New York, and being very much attached to Tim, he knew they would not only get along well together, but most likely have considerable fun on the way, and when they arrived there.

And fun they did have, for it would be almost impossible for two such fellows to travel together without creating something laughable in some shape or other, more especially now that their time was wholly their own, and they had nothing else to do.

At Cincinnati they concluded to stop over for a day or two, both having acquaintances there, and also having a great liking for the city.

They had not been long in the place, however, before who should they come across but Smith, drunk as a boiled owl. In fact, he was having a regular old-fashioned spree, such as he loved, but such as he could not indulge in so long and extensively while in the employ of any manager as he now could when he was his own master. He did not expect to see any of the gang, and had stopped off at Cincinnati for the sole purpose of having a big spree. In fact, he was so drunk that he did not know them.

"Let's have some fun with him," said Tim.

"Fun? Better pump him out first," replied Charley, "for he's as full as an egg."

"That's the idea!" exclaimed Tim, suddenly.

"What?"

"Pump him out."

"How can we do it?"

"Get a doctor with a stomach pump."

"Nonsense! It would take a steam pump all day to do it."

"I have it," said Tim, after a moment's hesitation.

"What—a steam pump?"

"No; an idea."

"How big is it?"

"Big enough to cover the ground."

"Well, give us the ground plan of it."

"Will you go in if it looks good?"

"Yes, of course I will."

"Well, he's as full as he can hold now, and you know him well enough to know that he will go to sleep pretty soon and sleep it off. Don't you know?"

"Yes; well?"

"We'll go for a doctor, and tell the landlord that he has taken poison?"

"Well, proceed."

"In that way we will get a crowd around his bed, and get the doctor at work upon him with a stomach-pump—see?"

"Yes; but will the doctor and others believe that he has taken poison, especially when they know that he is drunk?" asked Charley.

"Why, cert. The most natural thing in the world. More drunken people commit suicide than sober ones do. Besides, I can fix it so that there will be no doubt."

"How?"

"I'll go to a drug store and get a five ounce bottle, then I'll go to another drug store and buy half an ounce of laudanum. We'll place that bottle on his table, so that it will look as though he had drank at least

four ounces, and then there'll be no doubting, you bet."

"That's so, provided all the while that we can get into his room."

"Bah! Did you ever know him to lock his door when he goes to bed drunk? If he was in the habit of doing so, we could never have played so many rackets on him."

"That's so. Well, we'll try it."

Tim's programme was followed out to the letter, and it showed him to be a close observer of Smith's disposition when drunk, for it wasn't an hour before he staggered up-stairs to his room and tumbled on the bed, without either locking the door or taking off his clothes, and in less than a minute he was asleep.

By that time Tim had procured the laudanum, and all was in readiness for the racket.

Tim stole up to Smith's room, and quietly deposited the bottle on a table that stood near the head of the bed, and then sauntered down to the sitting-room again, where he had left Charley waiting.

"All right, cuffy. Now, in about fifteen minutes you go up and come down greatly alarmed, and ask the landlord where the nearest doctor is. I'll work the rest," said Tim.

"Good enough, and if the thing works, we shall presently see some fun," answered Charley.

In a few minutes Tim sauntered up to the landlord, who stood behind the bar, and buying a cigar, he remarked:

"Smith is pretty drunk, isn't he?"

"Yes, but I presume that is nothing new, either to him or to you, since you have been with him so long," replied the landlord, who knew of their former relations.

"No, but I must say I never saw him quite so full before. He gets a fit of the blues on him now and then, and at such times he drinks very heavily."

"Well, he must have a double dose of the blues on him now," said the landlord, smiling.

"I guess he has."

At this point Charley rushed into the room, wild, to all appearances, with excitement.

"Tim—Tim, the old man has taken poison!" he exclaimed, in a loud whisper.

"What?" exclaimed both Tim and the landlord, in a breath.

"Yes, he has swallowed laudanum enough to kill two men; I have just come from his room; I say, landlord, where is the nearest doctor?"

"Just a block away; just on the corner of the next street. Hurry and tell him to bring his stomach pump, for I wouldn't have it known that a drunken man had committed suicide in my house for a thousand dollars. Here, John, go with this man and show him where Doctor Squirt lives, and if he isn't in, go to the next nearest one, and hurry!" said the landlord, greatly excited.

"What a shame! who would have thought it?" said Tim, as Charley and the porter rushed out of the house.

"Thunder! Guess that was why he got so drunk; he wanted to get courage to commit suicide; I remember that he said when he took his last drink that it was his last, and that he was going to swear off. A devil of a way to swear off, that is."

"You hadn't ought to have given him so much," replied Tim.

"Well, confound it, I didn't think he was a cussed fool. Besides, if he hadn't got it here he would have gone somewhere else and got bad whisky," he added, chucking in a puff for himself along with his excuse.

"It is too bad."

"Hush! don't speak so loud, for I don't want it to become known if possible. Let's go up and see the old fool," he added, coming from behind his bar.

Without loss of time they flew to his room, and there found Smith, flat on his back, and in a drunken sleep from which the sick of a mule would scarcely rouse him.

"Ah! here is the bottle," exclaimed Tim, taking it up from the mantle.

"Laudanum! I guess he has done it this time sure enough," and the landlord shook him.

But as well might he have shaken a bale of cotton in the hope of rousing it to animation.

"Poor fellow! He is pretty far gone."

"Gone! drunk and poisoned too; I wish the doctor would hurry up."

"So do I."

"If he will only bring his pump we will have it out of him if I have to hitch a steam engine to it. The idea of the fool's coming to my house to kill himself. I'd rather give a thousand than have him die here."

"So would I; why don't that doctor hurry?"

"Ah, here he comes," and sure enough he was coming, followed by at least a dozen people, greatly to the landlord's disgust.

"Where is he?" demanded the physician, rushing wildly into the room, swinging his huge stomach pump.

"Here he is, doctor."

"How long has he had it down?"

"About half an hour, I guess."

"Ah, nothing will do but jerking it out of him," replied the doctor, throwing off his hat and coat.

He was a vigorous old fellow who did not believe in any half-way measures.

"That's right, doctor, pull it out of him if it bursts your pump," said the landlord.

"I'll fix him," replied the doctor, getting upon the bed and on his knees astride of the sleeping victim.

Inserting the end of his suction hose into Smith's capacious mouth he at once began to work his pump vigorously. The crowd stood looking on, but only two of the party wore a smile, and the reader best knows who they were.

"Hold the pail; I've struck it," said the doctor, and the landlord at once proceeded to obey orders.

Up came the whisky in a stream, all that he had drank that day.

"That's it, work away!" cried the delighted landlord.

And the truth was that he was working away in downright earnest, having already drawn about two quarts of liquor from poor Smith's stomach.

At this stage Smith began to wiggle, writhe, and groan.

"Shut up! We'll show you how to kill yourself in a respectable house," said the doctor, who by this time had pumped the poor fellow nearly dry.

Smith was by this time aware that some unaccountable thing was happening to him, and he would have shouted murder had not the sucker of the pump completely filled his mouth.

"Now you people go away and I will give him an antidote that will fetch him around all right," said the doctor.

"Yes, clear out!" cried the landlord, and the crowd of interested spectators reluctantly surged back just as the doctor withdrew the nozzle of the pump.

"Oh—oh!—what the devil—" he faintly muttered.

"That's all right. You just lie still, or I'll tackle you with that pump again."

"But what—"

"That's all right, I tell you. Here, take this and keep quiet. I'll fetch you out of it all right. Shut up, I say," he added, as Smith again attempted to speak.

Poor fellow! he was so completely exhausted and confused, that he didn't know where he was, who he was with, or what had been done to him. But realizing that he couldn't be much worse off if he was dead, he drank the medicine which the doctor handed to his lips, and then lay back, collapsed.

"There, I'll be in and see you again in an hour or so, but mind now, no more drinking that stuff," said he, pointing to the laudanum bottle.

Smith, however, saw no bottle or anything else in particular, but he heard what the doctor said, and answered faintly:

"No—no, I'll never drink another drop, never."

"That's right. See if you can't be a man. I'll soon be back, keep perfectly quiet," saying which he took his leave, closing the door upon one of the sickest and most confused patients he ever had.

Meantime Tim and Charley had paid their bill and were getting ready to resume their journey by the evening train.

"We mustn't let him see us," said Tim, after reaching their room.

"But we will leave our cards here to be sent after we are gone, for it would be too bad not to let him know to whom he is indebted for the loss of all the liquor he has drunk," said Charley.

"That's so; won't he open his eyes?"

"Won't he open his mouth?"

"And swear?"

"Well, somewhat, probably."

"And wonder if he will ever live to escape us!"

"Yes, but it serves him right."

"To be sure. It will be a great and glorious temperance lecture to him."

"And rob him of a great and glorious drunk. Come, let's go down stairs."

Down they went, and as before stated, paid their bill and ordered a carriage to take them to the depot a few minutes later.

"Well, landlord, how is he now?" asked Tim, as they met him.

"Oh, I guess he's all right now. But you bet he'll get bounced out of here just as soon as he is able to walk; I won't have such a cussed fool in my house."

"Deal gently with the erring, landlord."

"Oh, I go whole stacks of chips on the erring, but narry a red on a fool."

"But I guess this will teach him a lesson, and perhaps reform him. We are going to resume our journey by the next train, and as the doctor does not wish him disturbed, please give him our cards and say that we are sorry for him."

"All right; but I wish he was going with you," said he, taking the cards.

"Well, we don't, unless this finishes his spree. But, good-by. Hope to see you again some time. We shall show in Cincinnati before long."

"I hope so," said he, shaking their hands.

"Tell Smith not to drink so much and then he won't get himself into trouble."

"Very well, I'll tell him, but I fear it will be hard work to teach that old dog new tricks. Good-by," and the next moment the two jokers were gone.

You can judge how they laughed and talked the matter over when out of sight.

Meanwhile Smith was trying, as his befuddled senses gradually returned, to make out what the mischief had befallen him. His stomach was sore and his mouth tasted dreadfully. What did it mean? Finally he got up and rang for the landlord, who at once put in an appearance, fearing that Smith had got a relapse.

"Landlord—" he began, as he sat up on the side of the bed.

"Well, how do you feel now?"

"Feel! Landlord, I'm all broken up."

"I should say so."

"What does it all mean?"

"Mean! Confound you, don't you know what it means?" he demanded, savagely.

"No, I'll be hanged if I do."

"Look at that," said he, pointing to the laudanum bottle.

"Laudanum! poison!" he muttered; "but what has that to do with it?"

"All, I should say. What did you want to kill yourself for?"

"Kill myself?"

"Certainly. What did you swallow that bottle of poison for?"

"Why, you natural idiot, what did I want to swallow poison for when I was full of good whisky?"

"I guess you had too much whisky, but you haven't got it now, old man."

"What in thunder do you mean, anyhow?"

"Why, the doctor pumped it out of you along with the laudanum."

"Well, I'll be hanged!" exclaimed Smith.

"What, are you sorry?"

"I'm sorry to lose the whisky, of course; but I know nothing about the laudanum."

"Why, you bought it and took it for the purpose of committing suicide, and if your friends hadn't discovered you just as they did and sent for a doctor, you would have been doing clown business in a warmer locality by this time."

"What are you giving me, any way? I never bought a drop of laudanum or took a drop in my life."

"How about that bottle?"

"I never saw it before."

"Nonsense! a dozen people saw you under the influence of it, and saw the doctor pump it from your stomach."

"I tell you I never had a drop of it in my stomach. This is some racket."

"It came very near being one."

"I should say so," sighed Smith, getting up and walking without difficulty.

"And what is more, don't you forget to pay the doctor a good round fee, for he worked over you like the very deuce."

"I should say he did by the way I feel. But I'll never pay him a cent, for I had no need of him. I was simply drunk and lay down here to sleep it off."

"Nonsense. One of your friends came up here to see you and found you under the influence of the drug, and the bottle nearly empty, as you see."

"It's all a confounded hoax."

"Oh, I don't blame you for being ashamed of it and denying it."

"Who was it that found me so?"

"Oh, a fellow you know well enough. There were two of them, and here are the cards they told me to give you with their compliments and to say for you to shut down," said he, handing the cards to him.

Smith took them and read: "Tumbling Tim" and "English Charley."

"Good God! Where are they?" he demanded.

"Gone."

"That accounts for it. I knew it was a sell. Oh! that I could murder those devils!" he exclaimed, wildly, as he crushed the cards in his hand.

CHAPTER XXIX.

It took some time for Smith to make the poisoning hoax plain to the landlord, and to convince him that Tumbling Tim and English Charley were two of the worst practical jokers in the world, and that they had most undoubtedly worked up the racket.

And when the landlord finally had to believe it, he didn't feel very good, for it was almost as much a sell on himself and the doctor who had pumped Smith out, believing him to have taken laudanum when he had only taken too much whisky, as it was on Smith himself.

But by consulting the druggist whose label was on the bottle, they learned the facts of the case, and there was no longer room for doubt regarding the joke that had been played on them.

And oh! how sore Smith felt over it. Not only his sore stomach, which the doctor had sucked nearly wrong side out with his confounded stomach pump, but he felt sore in his heart to think that these fellows had gotten the best of him again, and again held him up to ridicule.

But it put an end to his spree in Cincinnati, and the next day he started to continue his journey east. But he was sober and continued to keep so for a long time after that. In fact, it was the greatest practical temperance lecture that he ever experienced.

But all he wanted was to get a shot at the jokers. He felt that he could murder them both in cold blood and eat a portion of each.

Meanwhile Tim and Charley were at least a day ahead of him towards New York, where they were to spend their month's vacation, prior to meeting the circus again at St. Louis for the spring and summer circuit.

The subject of the sell, however, lasted them both for laughing matter until they reached their destinations, although it was years afterwards before all met again.

"Hal my foot is on my native heath again!" exclaimed Tim, when they once more set foot on the wharf in New York.

"And mine is in New York mud again!" added Charley, as he pulled a boot that had been nicely polished out of one of the many mudholes to be found around the docks.

"You hadn't ought to complain, Charley."

"Why not?"

"Because you have struck it rich the first time," replied Tim, laughing.

"But hang me if I am satisfied with it."

"Very well, put in the other foot, or go in all over them."

"It would be 'all over' with some of the New York street sweepers if I had the bossing of them," said Charley, growling, as he attempted to scrape the mud from his besmeared boot.

"Well, you have got a scrape on hand the first thing, at all events."

"I should call it a scrape on foot. Here, sonny!" he

called to a bootblack, "come and let me give you a deed of this real estate."

"All right, boss; I'm yer kitty-did," said the little gamin, placing his box before him.

"What is your name?" asked Tim.

"Johnny Do."

"Johnny Do! I thought you said it was Kitty Did," said Charley.

"Well, yer know, boss, Kitty Did stands for ther boots I've shined; Johnny Do stands for what I'm doing. See?"

"Yes, I see. You'll do."

"I'll do you out of tenpence for this shine," replied the boy, half to himself.

"All right, but hurry up."

Yes, they did feel perfectly at home now, as any one does who has once lived in New York and been absent from it for a length of time.

In fact, they could not be content until they had visited every familiar place and renewed their acquaintance with it and the hosts of people whom they knew. And right heartily were they welcomed back again.

In addition to these, there were large numbers of the theatrical and circus profession in town at this season of the year, and they spent several days in the company of riders, clowns, tumblers, vaulters, and others connected with the business.

But when it became known that Tim was to take Bill Smith's place as first clown in Lent's circus, he was overwhelmed on all sides with congratulations,

best fellow that ever shined a boot or raised a laugh."

"Yer don't know Tumblin' Tim?" asked one gamin, of an old fellow who was anxious to know who was doing the honor and was told. "Why, yer must be an old duffer anyway if yer don't know Tumblin' Tim. Why, I arn't half so old as you be, an' I've know'd him as much as three years, an' he's a boss boy, yer bet."

The man didn't feel himself enlightened to any great extent, and so he asked a policeman who happened to stand near.

"Well, the fellow they call Tumbling Tim is a smart one. He used to be a bootblack here in Brooklyn, and heaps of trouble he used to give us, for he was always getting a crowd around him to see him tumble and cut up like circus fellows. I don't know what his real name is, and I doubt if he does himself, but ever since



"Three cheers an' a tiger for Tumblin' Tim, the boss boy of Brooklyn!" cried one of the leaders, and notwithstanding the yelling they had already done, the cheers and the tiger were given with a will.

"There you be, boss," said he, after he had finished the job.

"And here is a double nick for you," said Charley, handing him ten cents.

"And here is another for the profession," said Tim, "for I used to black boots myself."

"Yer did! Waal, yer a swell cove now. Guess yer must have struck it fat somewhere."

"Oh yes."

"On der crook?" asked the boy, with a half comical, half questioning look in his eye.

"Nix. On the square," replied Tim.

"Struck a mine?"

"Nix."

"Find a long lost dad?"

"Nix."

"Graft ter a find?"

"No. I'm President of the United States, so be a good boy, my son; save your pennies and don't pitch with them; keep your nose clean; let your whiskers grow, and you may arrive at the same degree of greatness yet," said Tim, as he and Charley turned to go away.

"I say, make me boss shiner of der White House, will yer?" the bright little fellow called after them, but as they made no reply, he eyed and tried his two "tenners" with his teeth to see if they were good, and then proceeded to turn a handspring and walk on his hands to express his delight at the good fortune that had overtaken him.

Tim and Charley at once proceeded to the Astor House, which they proposed to make their headquarters while they remained in New York.

A good breakfast and a little fixing up made them feel much better, and after awhile they sauntered out upon Broadway for the purpose of seeing the sights and hearing the sounds they had not heard for so many a long day.

some on one account and some on another, but principally because of his being the youngest clown in the ring, in this or any other country.

One day, soon after these festivities, Tim went over to Brooklyn to see his old chums, the boys who had been his almost vagrant companions in times past, resolved to give them a good time in some shape or other.

He came across first one and then another, still hovering about their old haunts, some of them picking up nickels with shoe-brush and box, and others pitching pennies and trying to increase their store in this youthful style of gambling.

As on a former visit to them, they hardly knew him, so changed was he from the dirty, good natured gamin that they had always seen him; but when it became known that Tumbling Tim was really among them once more, just as well dressed and as swell as on his visit before, they threw up their caps and whooped for joy.

And in spite of all that he had seen and enjoyed on a higher plane of life, Tim was heartily glad to see the boys once more; and not one of them was there that he could find or send word to who was not treated to a good square meal.

Then in the afternoon he hired a big coach, capable of seating at least fifty, and taking them all into it, each furnished with a segar, he drove them around the city, through the Park, and down to Coney Island, where a royal feed was prepared for them.

And what a bully old time they had. What shouting, singing, laughing, and carrying on they had that whole day long!

And if anybody asked, as many did, who was giving them this blow-out, they would say: "Why, Tumbling Tim, of course; Tumbling Tim that used to be a boot-black himself once, but who is now boss clown in a big circus, with gobs and boodles of money, and the

I have been on the police he has been known as Tumblin' Tim. Well, about a year ago, he went off with Lent's circus, and he has worked himself up from one position to another until I understand he is now chief clown, and on the road to fortune."

"And so he is giving his old companions a treat?"

"That seems to be the racket, and a good one they appear to be enjoying," replied the officer.

"What a pity they couldn't be gathered into the Sabbath-school," said the man, with a groan.

"Yes, very sad. You bet they would be on hand whenever there was a picnic or festival," replied the officer, with a smile, at which the old groaner turned and walked away, feeling that he had churned but got no butter.

Tim parted with his friends at the Fulton Ferry, and such a cheering did they give him that it attracted a large crowd of people, all anxious to learn what the excitement was.

"Three cheers an' a tiger for Tumblin' Tim, the boss boy of Brooklyn!" cried one of the leaders, and notwithstanding the yelling they had already done, the cheers and the tiger were given with a will.

"When yer come here wid yer circus we'll make it lively for yer!" yelled another.

"All right, boys, I hope to see you all then. Good-bye. Be good to yourselves, and give everybody a bully shine!" replied Tim, as he paid his fare at the ferry house and passed inside the gate.

"One!"

"Two!"

"Three!"

"Shine!" they all cried in chorus, and Tim passed out of sight into the crowd in the ferry house; and so the festivities of the day came to an end, and the little fellows sought their homes, as full of happiness as they could hold, and all kindly remembering Tumblin' Tim. Tim himself was never happier in his life, for it was

his natural disposition to make others happy; and this is one of the surest ways in the world of making one's self happy.

And so the time slipped away quickly and pleasantly until their vacation was nearly up, and Tim and Charley began to think about returning to St. Louis.

There was one more event, however, which naturally interested them very much, and which they both desired to attend, and that was a running horse race at Jerome Park, and so they made preparations to see that as the last thing before returning to their duties.

It was a beautiful spring day, and there was a large attendance at the course, including all sorts of people to be found anywhere in the social and official world.

The sport was fine, as it usually is at this delightful course. Tim and Charley had tickets to the "quarter stretch," so that they might get as near as possible to the horses, and there was no more enthusiastic fellows on the ground than they were. They also showed their knowledge of horses by betting several times on the winners, although other horses were held as favorites.

On this day they scooped in about a hundred dollars apiece before the last race was in order, and of course they felt exceedingly good over it.

The last event of the day was a hurdle race, in which six good horses were to contend, and of course there was considerable excitement and a great deal of betting on the result.

This was all the more animated because of a well-known mare, Bertha, that was among the number of contestants, a horse with this peculiarity—if she took it into her head to win, win she would, but if she happened not to feel like it, the old boy himself couldn't make her.

She had a cool habit of running against fences and trees for the purpose of rubbing off her jockey; of balking in front of her hurdles, and of behaving very bad generally if she didn't happen to want to run; on this account people were very shy about putting their money on her.

But on this occasion it was reported around among the knowing ones that the mare was in fine temper and condition, and for that reason there was quite a large amount of money placed on her for the winner of the race.

Both Tim and Charley put money on the mare, seeing by her build what she could do if she only had a mind to, and finally the bell rang for the start.

After two or three false starts it was seen that Bertha was in her tantrums again, and those who had bet their money on her felt sick enough and tried in vain to sell out, but nobody wanted any stock in the old gal.

But finally a good start was effected, and the mare went right to the front at a rattling pace, reviving the hopes of those who had money on her; and before they had gone once around she was leading the other horses by at least five rods.

"Bertha takes this cake, sure!" was the cry. "Yes, she has had her tantrum out and feels all right again," said others.

But just then she made a nasty balk and threw her rider over her head, knocking the senses out of him for a few moments, and then, although the other horses had caught up to and passed her, she began galloping around the course after them, all riderless.

As she was approaching the quarter stretch, Tim became possessed of a sudden idea, and leaping quickly over the fence, he ran up to and caught the bridle of the runaway, whose headlong motion assisted him in swinging himself into the saddle.

This unheard-of transaction of course created the greatest excitement among the thousands of spectators, but this was quickly blended with enthusiasm as they saw the daring youth gain his seat and begin to urge the animal to new exertions.

Nothing so subdues a horse as to let him know you are the master, and Bertha evidently knew this instantly, and she quickly began to regain her lost ground.

Then she reached and finally passed the other horses, when a deafening cheer went up that made the hillsides ring.

On, on she went, taking every hurdle in splendid form, leading the others by a length or two, while Tim, with neither whip nor spur, was holding her well in hand and keeping her right down to her work, encouraged by the thunders of applause from the grand stand.

Now they came out together on the home stretch, and the jockeys riding the horses in the rear felt like clubbing themselves as well as their horses, and they applied both whip and spur in the vain endeavor to pass Bertha.

Vain endeavor indeed, for she was coming down towards the judge's stand at a flying pace, while the yells and cheers of the people were almost deafening, and went under the wire fully two lengths ahead.

The people went nearly wild, and "Who is he?" was in every one's mouth.

Hundreds broke through and over the fence to get a sight of the daring jockey as he rode back slowly to the judge's stand.

"How is this?" demanded the judge.

"I claim the race for Bertha, sir," replied Tim, respectfully.

"And so do I," put in her owner, at that moment

[THE END.]

coming up. "There were no conditions except as to weight."

"Very well, weigh the lad," said the judge, and Tim was hustled into the weighing room with his saddle, and was then found to be five pounds too heavy.

This, of course, settled it, for as she was to carry one hundred and sixteen pounds, if the weight had been found to be less than that the race would have been given to the second horse.

Everybody seemed to want to shake Tim by the hand. In fact, they gave him a perfect ovation, nearly pulling him to pieces in their frenzy of delight.

"How came you to do it?" asked several.

"Because I didn't want to lose the money I had bet on her," replied Tim, smartly; and then he became a greater hero than before, if possible.

Tim and Charley returned to New York that evening more than two hundred dollars apiece better off than when they set out, besides having had lots of sport.

They did not wait to see what the papers would say about the daring exploit, but took the night express train for St. Louis, but they were full of it the next day, giving graphic accounts of the daring ride; yet none of them could say who the young horseman was, only that his companions said he was called Tumbling Tim, and was connected with Lent's circus.

This accounted for a part of it, but it only enhanced Tim's reputation among fellows of his age, and on all sides he was voted a brick.

Well, in good time they reached St. Louis, where they found the reorganized circus and menagerie troupe nearly ready to start, or rather, ready to show one night in St. Louis for the purpose of getting into perfect working order.

When the performance came off Tim made his appearance in his brand new clown's dress, creating a decidedly good impression; but when he came to show them his business, it was a general verdict that he was the best and most original clown in the profession.

Well, my story of Tumbling Tim may as well end here as anywhere, since the reader knows him pretty well by this time, as well as his style of business, both in and out of the ring. They have followed his fortunes with interest, I hope, for twenty-nine weeks, during which they have seen him rise from the lowest to the highest position in the profession he always liked, and what more fitting place to leave a hero in, than at the top of the ladder he started to climb.

In closing, I will not say what name Tim is now known by, although many know it, but at this time he is the leading clown in one of the largest and most renowned circuses traveling; yet, in spite of the renown he has gained, he is, and always will be, TUMBLING TIM.

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